Wladyslaw Gomulka, still showing his prison pallor, reviewing Polish army units in front of the Soviet-built Palace of Culture, on the third day after his return to power. On his right is Prime Minister Jozef Cyrankiewicz; at the far left, the Chairman of the State Council, Alexander Zawadzki.

Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, only a few days after his release from imprisonment, blessing a group of newly ordained priests.

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The Warsaw heresy

THE WARSAW HERESY

S. L. Shneiderman

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Contents

Part One

The Four Days That Shook Poland

1

GOMULKA—FROM PRISON TO POWER

On four sunny October days in the year 1956 when the chestnut trees in the parks of Warsaw were flaming in their autumn gold, a bloodless revolution against Moscow took place in Poland, and the halo of a national hero was placed on the head of Wladyslaw Gomulka, long a prisoner of the Stalin regime. During these four days Polish factory workers and university students went out into the streets of the martyred capital, prepared with naked hands to meet the bayonets and tanks of the Soviet forces led by Marshal Ivan S. Konev, the Commander-in-Chief of the Warsaw Pact Army.

Poland's October revolution against the domination of Soviet Russia flashed over the dark horizon of the Communist empire like a fiery meteor, and its impact on the myth of Soviet impregnability has been shatteringly profound. Poland was asserting its traditional readiness to fight for independence. Because of the country's geographic location between Soviet Russia and East Germany, Polish independence could express itself only in the relatively mild demand to be allowed to follow its "own path to Socialism." In the face of the danger of active Soviet intervention, the whole nation backed the thrusting forward of Wladyslaw Gomulka as the recognized national leader. Workers and students, teachers and writers, the declassed middle class and even the devout Catholic masses—everyone saw in Gomulka the only national figure capable of uniting the various hostile forces within Poland in a common resolve to avoid civil war.

In those critical October days the Polish population, most of which was anti-Communist, woke up from its unrealistic dream of complete independence from Soviet influence. It was quick to realize that an attempt to secure unlimited freedom from the Communist bloc could lead only to Soviet military intervention. Aware of this peril, the people of Poland displayed unusual self-discipline at the relatively free parliamentary elections held in January 1957 after the revolution. They understood Wladyslaw Gomulka's hint that "if you cross the name of the Communist candidates off the election lists, you may be crossing Poland off the map of Europe."

There were a number of major gains from the October revolution. First and foremost was freedom of expression, unprecedented for a country behind the Iron Curtain. Next, the police terror was suppressed. Then, forced collectivization was stopped, and the right of the peasant to own land was reaffirmed. Finally, a truce was concluded with the Catholic Church.

At every opportunity Gomulka assures the people that these gains are permanent although he carefully avoids any reference to their October origin. Only one October revolution is recognized in the Communist world, the world-shaking October Revolution of 1917, so Poland soft-pedals the memories of its own October uprising against Moscow. The process of expunging the word "October" from the chronicles of Polish Communism has been conspicuous at every Party gathering since 1957. The early Plenums of the Polish United Workers' Party gave currency to the slogan "October is over," but by the time the Third Party Congress convened in Warsaw in March 1959 the word "October" had vanished, and the term "Eighth Plenum" was used to refer to the 1956 uprising. The Eighth Plenum was the turbulent meeting of the Central Committee, held in Warsaw in October 1956, at which the concessions wrested from Moscow infused all of Poland with the conviction that the nation once more had an identity and character of its own. The historic Eighth Plenum was recognized by the Third Party Congress as charting Poland's "own path toward Socialism." Gomulka himself set his seal on the significance of the Eighth Plenum at the conclusion of the 1959 Congress—the first to be held in his regime—when he summarized its deliberations in these terms:

"Every speaker we have heard has supported the political line promulgated by the Eighth Plenum and developed by the succeeding Plenums of the Central Committee. Since only the Congress can change the Party line and since the Congress has fully endorsed the Eighth Plenum, its conclusions have the confirmation of the Party's highest organ."

The enthusiasm with which literally all of Poland greeted Gomulka's return to power did not overwhelm that sober Communist veteran. Gomulka suffered from no illusion that he would be in a position to maintain this popular enthusiasm. The Polish economy was in a fearful state of chaos; Gomulka calculated that raising the standard of living was a long-range process. The economic miracles expected from him were unrealistic, and the disappointment was unavoidable.

Gomulka concentrated first on gaining control of the instruments of power, namely, the Polish United Workers' Party which had grown enormously during the years of the Stalin regime. The Party machine had been taken over by careerists. According to the official figure the membership in the Party was over one million out of a total population of twenty-eight million. Less than half the members in the "worker's party" were workers; the rest were intellectuals and officials employed in the government apparatus and the state enterprises. So Gomulka moved to weed out Party membership. He entrusted this task to his former bitter opponent, Roman Zambrowski. Zambrowski had maintained control of the Party machine and had developed the so-called "cadres" of the elite. The purging of the Party was called "verification." Party members were called to personal interviews at which their past and the motives that had brought them into the Party were examined. At the Twelfth Plenum of the Central Committee, held in October 1958, Gomulka announced the result of the "verification." Over 206,000 members who had joined the Party "for reasons of personal convenience" were purged, thus reducing membership by 15.5 per cent.

In theory, the purge was directed against both extreme wings of the Party. Supposedly, both the "revisionists," labeled the "liquidators of Socialism," and the "dogmatists and conservatives," the so-called "Stalinists" of the "Natolin" group, were to be re-

moved. (On the eve of the October 1956 revolution the pro-Moscow group conferred in the historic villa belonging to the aristocratic Branicki family in Natolin, near Warsaw.) The purge, however, concentrated on the "revisionists," in whom Gomulka saw a far greater danger to himself, the Party and relations with Soviet Russia. The Natolin group's influence was felt to be growing weaker daily, and they were said to have stopped existing as a group. Gomulka and those closest to him were believed to be convinced that the Natolin group no longer had Khrushchev's support after Molotov, Malenkov and Shepilov had been deposed. This interpretation was reinforced when Khrushchev recalled Soviet Ambassador to Poland Panteleimon Ponomarenko who gave the Natolin group its instructions.

Since the Stalinists were no longer a threat, Gomulka turned all his critical ire against the revisionists. At the Tenth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party, held at the end of October 1957, he called the revisionists "bourgeois, Social Democratic philosophers, who spend their time dreaming up new ways of building Socialism in Poland and other places." The Stalinist Natolin group, Gomulka labeled "conservatives and sectarians." Though stressing that conservatism was a malady like revisionism, he concluded that the Party's chief weakness, the sickness that had to be cured first of all, was the "liquidating spirit of the revisionists."

> "We will not tolerate any ideological confusion in our ranks. Under the false slogan of defending the achievements of October the revisionists are attempting to undermine the conclusions of the Eighth Plenum. For them [the] October [revolution] is a continuation of their policy aiming to split the Party, to undermine the People's Government, to spread defeatism and to destroy the Socialist system. . . . The Party must remain monolithic. The events of 1956 have radically changed the situation in our country. We have opened the door to democratic freedoms and we do not intend to shut them. But we must now guard the doors far more strictly than before."

Gomulka's warning, intended directly for the intellectuals, was heeded only by some of them. Leading writers, poets, novelists and critics threw away their Party cards to indicate their decision to fight for full freedom of artistic expression. On the other hand, the

editors of the daily newspapers and the people who wrote for popular publications and magazines and faced the day-to-day problems took the hint: they had to curb the tone of their criticism of Soviet Russia and the other Communist countries.

In his feverish efforts to repair the breaches in the Polish Communist Party, Gomulka had the full support of Khrushchev, who was making similar efforts to control the Communist Party in Soviet Russia. True, Khrushchev had met Gomulka with insults during the dramatic October days of 1956; but, a shrewd man, Khrushchev was quickly persuaded that Gomulka was a realist and that in order to maintain his power in Poland Gomulka would not permit the various opposition groups to go off at various tangents from the Communist line. Consequently, the two men have established friendly relations despite the sharp contrast in their characters. Modest, quiet Wladyslaw Gomulka and noisy, violent Nikita Khrushchev have been further drawn together by their common high regard for technicians and organizers and their distrust of intellectuals. In contrast to Nikita Khrushchev—and to Marshal Tito, as well—Gomulka is extremely reserved with public statements. This is perhaps the most interesting quality of Gomulka's statesmanship, for it indicates how delicate he gauges his position and Poland's role in the struggle between East and West to be.

There are a number of paradoxes in Gomulka's career. He served as one of the master builders of the Stalinist state in Poland, and yet he became its most famous victim. On the few occasions Gomulka failed to follow the Stalinist line, he was restrained by practical rather than ideological considerations. He opposed agricultural collectivization because he understood the Polish peasants better and was more realistic in appraising their reactions to these sweeping changes than the official theoreticians. For his gradualism, Gomulka was called a Titoist; he was expelled from the Party and imprisoned. Gomulka's five years in jail made him a national hero, and during the bloodless October revolution his resurrection tempered the bitterness of Poland's masses against Moscow.

Wladyslaw Gomulka was born in 1905 in Krosno, Southern Galicia. His father, a pauperized farmer, emigrated to the United

States but after a few years returned to Poland. The young Wladyslaw attended school until he was fourteen and then went to work in the oil fields of Boryslaw. There he became active in the Communist youth movement and at twenty-one was a functionary of the then clandestine Polish Communist Party. In 1931 he was arrested and sentenced to four years' imprisonment. Soon after his release he was re-arrested and sentenced to seven years. At the outbreak of World War II, Gomulka was serving his sentence in the prison of the small textile town of Sieradz in the province of Lodz; but at the approach of the German armies, all prisoners were released. Gomulka fled to Lwow and then went to Nazi-occupied Warsaw where he played a leading role in organizing the Communist underground. The majority of Communist leaders fled to the Soviet Union, but Gomulka remained in Poland during almost the entire period of Nazi occupation. In the summer of 1944, shortly before the outbreak of the Warsaw uprising, he made his way to the eastern part of Poland behind the Soviet lines. When the provisional Lublin Government was formed in December 1944, Gomulka was appointed Deputy Premier under the Socialist, Edward Osubka-Morawski. The real bosses, however, were the Moscow-trained Communist leaders, Boleslaw Bierut, President of the National Council (*Krajowa Rada Narodowa*) and Jakub Berman, Undersecretary of State. In 1946, when the government moved to Warsaw, Gomulka was entrusted with the important Ministry for the Recovered Territories. At the same time he continued to serve as Secretary General of the Polish United Workers' Party. Two years later, however, Gomulka was forced to resign from all his jobs, and in 1949 he was expelled from the Party altogether. He was arrested in the summer of 1951 and isolated in a villa in Miedzeszyn, a suburb of Warsaw. At the end of 1954 Gomulka was released but it was not until the summer of 1956, after the death of Boleslaw Bierut, then the Secretary General of the Polish United Workers' Party, that Gomulka re-established contact with the Party and was restored to active membership.

Gomulka is a tough, quiet man, remarkable for his exceptional industry. A passionate swimmer, every morning at the stroke of eight he can be seen on his way to the swimming pool in the Pal-

ace of Culture in Warsaw, where he stays a little less than an hour. Punctually at nine he is at his office, in the huge building of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party. At twelve he returns for lunch to his apartment in Praga, a Warsaw suburb on the right side of the Vistula. Gomulka lives in an unpretentious four-room apartment which is part of a new workers' colony built in 1946. Gomulka's wife lived there all the time her husband was in prison. After Gomulka returned to power, the Party wanted to move him into a more distinguished apartment, but he declined. Outside of the weekly Politburo meeting, which sometimes lasts till late at night, and infrequent ceremonial occasions, Gomulka spends his evenings at home, studying the reports prepared for him by the various sections of the Party. He also reads the Polish and Soviet newspapers, apparently unwilling to rely on the press abstracts furnished by the Party secretariat.

Gomulka has had no formal education beyond elementary school but he is a passionate student of history, particularly that of the workers' movement, which he studies in Polish, Russian and German. His study is lined with bookcases, but only a few of the books are belles-lettres, and these are limited to historical novels. Gomulka writes his own speeches; his wife helps him in the research. She is a professional statistician and during Gomulka's arrest in 1951 worked in the Central Committee of the Party in the section of the elite "cadres" that Roman Zambrowski headed.

Wladyslaw Gomulka's neighbors, mostly workers and government officials, often meet him walking in the nearby park, usually accompanied by his wife. She is a short woman and looks much younger than her husband. Their only bodyguard on these walks is a large, brown St. Bernard dog. The Gomulkas' favorite resting place is the well-known health resort Krynica, where they go for several weeks during the summer and for a briefer spell in the winter. It was at Krynica, incidentally, that Gomulka was arrested in 1951.

Gomulka is interested in every detail of Poland's development, particularly the economic problems. He frequently calls on experts from various fields to explain their subjects to him personally, but he always makes his own decisions. His directives come in the form of memoranda written in his own hand. I have seen a few of these

directives, written with a red pencil on ordinary notebook paper; the handwriting is neat, the language very simple.

It is clear that Gomulka's prestige in Poland is so high that he could liquidate both his Stalinist and his revisionist opponents. But this is hardly to be expected—first, because Gomulka is against any kind of political repression, and second, because he calculates that his power in Poland is largely dependent on his ability to play one group against the other. It is obvious to Gomulka that if he were to remove the former Stalinists who still occupy important positions in the Party machine and the government administration, the revisionists would be encouraged and a situation might arise where Poland would fall victim to a Soviet intervention like that in Hungary. On the other hand, if Gomulka were to exterminate the revisionists, he would lose his most important support in the battle against the Stalinists. That is why Gomulka is prudent and mild with his opponents and why nothing resembling the Stalin purges, or even those of Khrushchev, is to be expected in Poland.

2

THE DEATH OF "PO PROSTU"

ON THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY of Poland's victorious revolt against Moscow, the streets of Warsaw echoed once more to the clash and clamor of political upheaval. In contrast to the sunny skies of October 1956, a cold rain pelted the young men and women who had raised Wladyslaw Gomulka to power and were now, in October 1957, demonstrating against his authority.

They gathered in front of the universities in Warsaw to protest the liquidation of their militant magazine *Po Prostu*, only to be attacked by platoons of the new police, the so-called "Citizens' Militia." Gomulka had sent the police to knock dreams of far-

reaching reforms out of the heads of the aroused students with rubber truncheons. There was bloodshed at Narutowicz Plaza that day.

"It was horrible to see our young people suddenly confronted by the faceless defenders of our October authority," a Polish Communist bitterly told me. She had been imprisoned on a trumped-up charge of espionage from 1951 to 1956. "The faceless defenders" referred to the gas masks that the police wore when they attacked the defenseless students. I was there at the time. I smelled the tear bombs and ducked the police truncheons.

While the students were demonstrating in front of the Polytechnical Institute and the building of the Central Committee of the Communist Party at the intersection of Nowy Swiat and Aleje Jerozolimskie in Warsaw, the Writers' Union was holding an extraordinary all-night meeting. The writers passed a unanimous resolution condemning the new stringent censorship and sent the resolution to Gomulka personally. The Polish press ignored it; but the next morning, copies of the resolution were circulating in the coffee houses.

The suspension of *Po Prostu* signalized the Gomulka regime's introduction of a new strong-arm policy, directed against the so-called "revisionists" whose most important organ of expression was *Po Prostu*. In its last phase, the magazine had turned into a forum for writers and publicists with a variety of political lines, including anti-Communists. But what was significant about the magazine was that its management remained in the hands of convinced, organizational Communists who pressed the daring concept of the possibility of open, loyal opposition in a Communist regime.

Although *Po Prostu* was suspended, its name became a slogan. Actually, *po prostu* is a common everyday expression in Polish, meaning "quite simple." Nowadays, however, if the expression is used innocently by a speaker at a public meeting, it produces a gale of laughter. The cynics jibe that the Gomulka regime will eventually have to expurgate *po prostu* from the Polish dictionary.

The protest demonstrations at the suspension of *Po Prostu* were significant as expressions of disappointment over unfulfilled hopes. The scope of the demonstrations, however, has been considerably exaggerated. At the height of the conflicts between police and

students, life went on as usual everywhere else in Warsaw. There was no general atmosphere of revolt against the regime. As usual, the theatres, movie houses and coffee houses were packed; the old people and the man in the street took note of what was happening only to deplore the young hotheads who had learned nothing from the bloody lesson of the Hungarian insurrection. The general feeling was one of defeatism: there was no point in fighting, because all it could achieve, from the practical point of view, was needless bloodshed.

The Communist Party propaganda astutely played on this pervading mood of apathy. The press hammered away at the slogan, "It's not October any more." This was an indirect attack on the writers who kept dredging up the crimes of the recent past and lamenting the frustrated hopes they had placed in the new regime which had come into power in October 1956.

Perhaps more dangerous for the Gomulka government was the fact that the "revisionists" also rejected the idea of "voluntary regimentation," even in the service of a regime for which they themselves had fought and set up. Gomulka's adherents recognized that the writers and intellectuals had prepared public opinion for the revolt and for Gomulka's bold accession to power. But the new First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party (P.Z.P.R.) immediately warned the nation that they need have no illusions about the possibility of a "second stage" in the revolution. There would be no further step, he declared, toward democratization of the country's political life which might lead to a multiparty system and broader cooperation with the West—whatever the revisionists might dream. But the revisionists, who are strongest among university students and creative intellectuals, warned Gomulka that in conciliating the Stalinists of the Natolin group he was undermining the base of his own regime.

I heard boldly pessimistic prophecies for Wladyslaw Gomulka's new policy expressed in heated conversations at coffee house tables and even in open discussion at various clubs where the young Polish intellectuals meet. Especially astonishing to me were the discussions I sat in on at the coffee shop of the publishing house Czytelnik near the Sejm (Parliament) and at the Krzywe Kolo

Club meeting held in a historic building situated on the plaza of the old city.

The Krzywe Kolo Club discussion dealt with the economic achievements of the Gomulka regime's first year. The chief speaker was the well-known economist, Professor Czeslaw Bobrowski, a former leader of the Polish Socialist Party (P.P.S.), who had returned from abroad only several years before and had been named Ambassador to Sweden. Bobrowski is now a member of the State Economic Council, whose chairman is Professor Oscar Lange.

Czeslaw Bobrowski's conclusions were optimistic. He defended Gomulka's curb on a drive for furthergoing economic reforms—particularly by broadening private initiative in industry and trade. A lively debate ensued. Bobrowski's stand was sharply attacked both by the young intellectuals and by the embattled economists, such as Professor Edward Lipinski and Professor Hagmajer. They demanded the principle that Poland was to find its "own path to Socialism," which Gomulka had solemnly proclaimed, be realized more speedily.

These open discussions of controversial questions were evidence that despite the sharpening of censorship in Poland, it remains the only country behind the Iron Curtain where people can talk without terror of political repressions. Even Gomulka's critics, who were disappointed because the hopes they had placed in the Polish October revolution had not been fulfilled, admitted that the fact they can freely express their disappointment is itself undeniably one of the most important achievements of the Gomulka regime.

In former years, the censor was a mysterious kind of torture chamber, against which the press dared not speak a single word; but nowadays the Polish press prints vigorous articles denouncing the censor's methods, or even poking fun at it. Nor does the censorship smell of political repression any longer, as it once did. In many instances, magazine editors and book authors go directly to the censor to protest or bargain; quite often they have their way.

I was amazed when I visited the press department of the Polish Communist Party. I had come for an explanation of the closing down of *Po Prostu*. To my surprise I was shown page proofs of the last confiscated number of the journal and was told: "Read it, and

judge for yourself!" The pages were heavily underlined with the censor's red pencil. These were articles in which the editors and writers of *Po Prostu* had prepared a balance sheet for the year's achievements since October 1956. They had come to the unhappy conclusion that Poland was in a catastrophic, hopeless situation and that the only solution was to convert the economy along the lines of Western capitalism.

The Polish writers became alarmed when the Gomulka government's previously liberal censor began to suppress not only criticism of the present state of affairs in Poland but also the bitter output condemning the crimes of the Stalin period in a plethora of documentary and literary pieces. Thus, for example, literally at the last moment, the censor prevented the publication of a novel by the well-known Communist writer Stanislaw Wygodzki. The novel, *Arrested for a Hearing,* dealt with the inquisition chambers of the Stalinist Security Police in Poland, the so-called U.B. It had already been printed, parts had been circulated among the writers, and a Paris publishing house had contracted to publish a French edition. *Arrested for a Hearing* was much talked about in Warsaw literary circles, where it was regarded as Stanislaw Wygodzki's crowning achievement. Everyone recognized the chief character as modeled after Leon Ferszt, one of the few old Communist veterans who survived the liquidation of the Polish Communists in the Soviet Union after the Polish Communist Party was dissolved in 1938. When Poland was liberated, Leon Ferszt returned from Russia and became active in the Party again. In 1949, Ferszt was suddenly arrested after the Third Plenum and kept in prison five years without a trial. He was fearfully tortured and ordered to confess espionage and diversionary activities. At the same time the jailers had Ferszt write his autobiography several times in an attempt to catch him in contradictions.

The story was that at first Wygodzki was encouraged by the Party to reveal the U.B. inquisition in all its horror. But in the winter of 1957 there was a sudden change of line, and the novel was pulled off the press.

Much the same thing happened to the stillborn magazine *Europa,* whose early demise created a storm in Poland and led a group of the most prominent writers to throw away their Party

cards in protest. For several months the editors of the new magazine waged a battle with the censor over their project of making close contact with the creative forces of the Western world through *Europa*. The leading prose writers, poets and critics, led by the president of the Polish Writers' Union, Antoni Slonimski, were associated with *Europa*. The first number of the journal was supposed to have poems, stories and essays by the famous poets Adam Wazyk, Mieczyslaw Jastrun and Pawel Herc, the great Catholic novelist Jerzy Andrzejewski, the leading Polish critic Jan Kott and others.

All the time I was in Poland the literary coffee houses seethed with news of the dispute between the editors of *Europa* and the censor; the matter had actually gone to Gomulka himself. The writers appeared to have won their point when the press announced the publication of the first number and its contents. But at the last moment the censor banned the magazine because the editors refused to agree to remove several poems and articles.

The coffee houses had it that the censor had been particularly vehement against a group of poems by Adam Wazyk, whose sensational *Poem for Adults*, which appeared in 1955, played an important role in preparing the climate of opinion for the October revolution. Despite the censor I obtained a copy of Wazyk's "dangerous" poems without any difficulty. Their political character is far less obvious than *Poem for Adults*. In one poem the poet describes his impression of a pre-Colombian sculpture:

In the Museum of Man
is the representation of a cruel God
bearing the face of his sacrifice,
an invisible face
recognizable
by the double mouth.

Now I understand
the ritual of the mask
and the unhappiness of the passerby
whose face has been ripped off.

Another poem is innocently entitled *Play in the Darkness* and begins:

A fire in a laundry, but nothing was burned,
The firemen came, carrying the water hose.

This was not the birth of any monster,
It was only a girl who had cropped a birth in a gateway.

Apparently Gomulka's intelligent censor, who had himself employed allegorical devices for political purposes during the years of the Stalinist terror, felt that the Polish reader would easily understand Wazyk's innuendoes: the cruel God hiding behind the face of the common man was the new mask of Communism, and the fire put out in the laundry was the extinguished hopes once entertained for the Polish October revolution.

The fact is that at a later date all the poems and articles of the confiscated *Europa* were published in other magazines without the slightest change.

3

HISTORY REWRITTEN

In the course of consolidating the gains of the October revolt Gomulka paradoxically felt that any conspicuous celebration of its first anniversary would be endangering the gains of that revolt. He refused to encourage radical Polish intellectuals to draw any parallels between their own October revolution and the earth-shaking Russian Revolution of October 1917. To do so would be, in Gomulka's opinion, only to add fuel to the flames of Soviet wrath toward Poland. Therefore, the only public demonstration that took place in Warsaw in October 1957 was a meeting honoring the memory of the fifty heroes of the underground resistance movement whom the Nazi occupation forces had hanged in Warsaw in October 1942.

The meeting took place in the circular Congress Hall of the

Palace of Culture. Capable of accommodating an audience of 3,000, the room is depressing in its awkward massiveness and the ornate luxury of its white marble, red plush, crystal and gold. A year before, in October 1956, Gomulka had been hailed in this same hall by the Polish youth and intellectuals who had literally pulled him out of prison on a wave of popular enthusiasm shared even by the opponents of Communism. But a year later, the hall was half empty, despite the widespread publicity given to the meeting. The main galleries were vacant; even the seats up front were not all taken. Without any difficulty I slipped into a seat in the front row and found myself face to face with Wladyslaw Gomulka, Premier Jozef Cyrankiewicz and other members of the government and Politburo on the platform.

Gomulka sat in the center of a long table. He is a man of average height with a bony head, neatly combed, gray thinning hair and a pale, lean face. On Gomulka's right sat Alexander Zawadzki, the Chairman of the State Council, who is regarded as a leader of the center group in the Polish Communist Party. Cyrankiewicz sat on Gomulka's left, and next to him Roman Zambrowski, considered the Gray Eminence in the Gomulka regime—the man in the shadows who really holds the reins of the Party machinery. Near Zambrowski sat young Jerzy Morawski, a tall, energetic man in his forties with a mop of black hair. A talented political publicist, Morawski played an important role in the October revolution. He is the man Gomulka entrusted with the task of administering the revived censorship. General opinion in Poland maintains that Gomulka considers Morawski his successor.

The main speaker was Zenon Kliszko, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party and Vice President of the Polish Sejm, or Parliament. Kliszko is a veteran comrade-in-arms of Gomulka. Together they founded the Polish Workers' Party during the Nazi occupation, replacing the former Communist Party which Stalin had dissolved in 1938 as "a nest of traitors and spies"—many of the Polish Communist leaders were later shot in Moscow. In 1951 Kliszko was arrested together with Gomulka and was imprisoned until the end of 1955.

Thin and tall, Kliszko has the face of an ascetic. He is the historian of the Communist movement in Poland, so it was natural

that his speech should deal with the role that the reorganized Communist Party had played in the struggle against the Nazi occupation forces. Kliszko belittled the underground resistance activities of the patriotic Armja Krajowa (Home Army), which was under the control of the Polish Government-in-Exile in London. He did concede, however, that the Communist Party had erred in condemning the Armja Krajowa-led Warsaw uprising and later persecuting the surviving heroes of the revolt.

Although Kliszko never mentioned Josef Stalin by name, he strongly condemned the "cult of the individual"—the recognized Communist euphemism for the Stalinist dictatorship. According to Kliszko, it was the "cult" that was responsible for the errors and crimes of the former Communist regime in Poland. He stressed the past almost to the neglect of recent events and made only a glancing reference to what happened in October 1956. One point that Kliszko underlined was that the Communist Polish Workers' Party had been the only underground resistance movement to struggle for a "national, united Poland," one that would include the historic Polish territories in the west, along the Baltic Sea, which had belonged to Poland as far back as the Piast Dynasty a thousand years ago. He also brought out the fact that the fifty underground heroes whose memory was being celebrated had included thirty-five members of the Party; only three had been representatives of the London Government-in-Exile, and ten had no party affiliation.

During the intermission I heard more comments in the lobby about the prominent place that Roman Zambrowski occupied on the platform than about Kliszko's speech. Zambrowski's position near Gomulka was interpreted as proof of his leading role in the Gomulka regime. Everyone had apparently noticed that during the pauses between speeches Gomulka had chatted almost exclusively with Zambrowski, while the other members of the Politburo and the government remained at a distance.

Even Roman Zambrowski's adversaries concede that he is the most competent man in the Party and that he has always maintained close, personal contacts with the most active workers in the provincial Party committees. It is also common knowledge that Zambrowski was one of the chief initiators of the drive to return

Gomulka to power—consequently he is hated with particular virulence by the Stalinists.

Lean Roman Zambrowski is forty-seven years old. His sharp features and glowing eyes express rare energy and magnetic power. Zambrowski is from a middle-class Warsaw Jewish family. He has been active in the Polish Communist movement since high school days. As a student at the University of Warsaw, he was one of the leaders of the Communist student organization, along with the deposed Vice Premier Jakub Berman. Berman always stayed in the shadows, concentrating on work with the intellectuals; but Roman Zambrowski very early threw himself heart and soul into the political organization of the young people in the Polish villages. He studied agricultural problems and was credited with being responsible for a series of strikes by Polish peasants in Galicia and the Poznan area.

In 1939 Roman Zambrowski was flung into the concentration camp at Kartuz Bereza; but, having been liberated at the outbreak of the war, he went to the Soviet Union. There, together with Jakub Berman, Hilary Minc, and Wanda Wasilewska, he organized the Committee of Polish Patriots in Moscow. When Stalin broke off relations with the London Government-in-Exile and built up a Polish Communist army in Russia, Zambrowski became the new army's commissar for political indoctrination. In 1944, when the so-called "Lublin Government" was formed, Zambrowski became the head of the Party organization in the Polish Workers' Party (P.P.R.). Wladyslaw Gomulka was then the General Secretary of the P.P.R. Zambrowski was in charge of training the elite cadres—the secretaries and activists, who were to be the dynamic force within the Party committees throughout the country.

Zambrowski worked hand in hand with Gomulka in "unifying" the Polish Socialist Party (P.P.S.) and the P.P.R.—swallowing the P.P.S. into the P.P.R. to form the Polish United Workers' Party. By then, however, friction had developed between Zambrowski and Gomulka over the question of the collectivization of agriculture. Zambrowski faithfully hewed to the Moscow line that collectivization had to be accelerated in Polish villages, while Gomulka was opposed to such compulsion. As a practical man with concrete experience in dealing with Polish workers and peasants, Gomulka

foresaw what the official theoreticians could not admit—that the result would be economic catastrophe. Gomulka even went so far as to warn against a too rapid pace in the mechanization of agriculture; as he put it, to the primitive peasant "the tractor is the ghost of the kholkhoz (collective farm)." But Gomulka only succeeded in being shouted down as a Titoist.

In 1949, the year of crisis for the Polish Communist regime, Gomulka and his adherents were downgraded and later jailed. Zambrowski's was one of the strongest voices heard against Gomulka and his policies at the Third Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party, where this took place. Held between November 11 and 13, 1949, the Third Plenum was turned into a kind of forum in condemnation of Gomulka and his adherents.

4

THE PROTOCOLS OF THE STALIN INQUISITION

THE EVENTS that transpired at the Third Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' (Communist) Party reveal the fanaticism involved in the tragedy of Communism, with its deliberate cultivation of a kind of mass psychosis. This is best expressed in the remarkable document, the official report of the proceedings at the 1949 Third Plenum. It sheds a harsh light on the dark Moscow night that fell over Poland at that Plenum and lasted for a full five years, from 1949 until the end of 1954.

This report is now a bibliographical rarity. The Polish friend who gave it to me in Warsaw commented sarcastically: "Here are the Protocols of the Stalinist Inquisition in our country." Leafing through the faded pages, he pointed out the names of men, now

Gomulka's closest associates, who in 1949 had attacked Gomulka, Marian Spychalski, and Zenon Kliszko most bitterly and had then gone on to vote for the resolution expelling Gomulka and his partisans from Party leadership, thus opening the prison gates to them.

The report of the Third Plenum opens with that very resolution of expulsion, which at the same time notes that "the Polish Marshal, Comrade Constantin Rokossovski is unanimously opted" into the Central Committee. Rokossovski replaced General Spychalski, who was arrested after the Plenum. Spychalski had to wait for his "rehabilitation" until the October 1956 revolution; at that time, the very same men who had found him guilty of "undermining the army" raised him to the post of Minister of Defense, replacing the deposed Marshal Rokossovski.

The tone of the charges against Gomulka and his faction was set at the Third Plenum by Boleslaw Bierut, then General Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party. Bierut's speech was an exact reflection of the war panic and espionage psychosis that Moscow was eager to spread through the Communist world. The chief enemy was America. The most important American "agent" or "diversionist" in the Communist world was Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia, and Tito's liaison man in Poland was, supposedly, Wladyslaw Gomulka.

The report is a collection of monologues in which the leaders of the Central Committee compete amongst themselves in vituperation. The charges have little to do with the concrete problems of contemporary life in Poland. The accused were condemned either for cooperating outright with the foes of Communism, or, at the very least, for showing "insufficient alertness to the activity of traitors." Besides Gomulka's current collaborators (men such as Edward Ochab, Jerzy Morawski, Roman Zambrowski, and Stefan Staszewski), the present leaders of the Stalinist Natolin group, Stanislaw Lapot, Kazimierz Mijal, Franciszek Jozwiak and General Kazimierz Witaszewski, attacked the Gomulka faction.

Prime Minister Jozef Cyrankiewicz took a different tack. He never mentioned Gomulka by name, contenting himself with an attack on General Spychalski, who had been in charge of counterespionage for the Communist underground movement during the

Nazi occupation and had occupied a leading position in the army after the liberation. Cyrankiewicz concentrated his fire on his former comrades in the Polish Socialist Party (P.P.S.). He charged them with not having rid themselves of their old "Social Democratic nationalism and opportunism," despite their merger with the United Polish Workers' Party. Cyrankiewicz named a whole list of former Socialists who presumably had been drawn into the service of the "conspiracies of English and American imperialism."

The big mystery at the Third Plenum was the silence of Jakub Berman, then regarded as Moscow's most trusted agent in Poland. The supposition was that Hilary Minc's vicious attack on Gomulka expressed Berman's position. Minc, then economic dictator of Poland, branded Gomulka as a Polish Tito, and accused him of "errors" going back as far as the Nazi occupation.

> "Comrade Wieslaw's [the name used by Gomulka within the Party] erroneous political line made possible the mushrooming of provocations and betrayals in the ranks of the Polish Workers' Party both during the occupation and after liberation."

Another possible reflection of Berman's position was the speech by Stanislaw Radkiewicz, the police minister, who was directly under Berman. He recounted the vast damage that the "diversionists, provocateurs, and saboteurs" had wreaked, not only in the Communist Party but in every part of the national economy, particularly the agricultural cooperatives, the collective farms. Radkiewicz went on to represent this congeries of "diversionary" activities as part of an international conspiracy by the very same "imperialist agents who have been unmasked as the members of provocateur groups at the trials of Lechowicz and Jaroszewicz, at the Katowice trial of the Tito agent Petrowicz in Poland, at the Hungarian Laszlo Rajk trial, etc." Finally, Radkiewicz concluded that these criminal activities were carried out in Poland by persons under the influence of Stanislaw Mikolajczyk (the peasant leader and former Vice Premier who fled the country in 1947).

Roman Zambrowski's attack on Gomulka was no less bitter. Gomulka, Zambrowski began, had not "helped to unmask the treasonous Lechowicz group" or condemned with sufficient vigor the "right-nationalist forces—what we would now call the Titoist

forces." This odd kind of reproach for failure to do certain things or for "remaining silent" was typical of the charges leveled during the Third Plenum. The Stalinist inquisitors went on to blame the accused for "not helping the Party uncover criminals." Apparently they were not content with the accused men's humiliated statements of "self-criticism"; the demand was that they present new victims for slander. In the words of Roman Zambrowski:

> "Comrade Gomulka could have helped the Party by unmasking the Lechowicz group. . . . Spychalski knew these spies from the Second International. Did he help the Party? . . . These comrades have made statements for us here, they have beaten their breast, hoping thus to satisfy us. But we must make it quite clear that their refusal to give the Party the needed help is evidence that they are maintaining their old positions."

Stefan Staszewski also attacked Gomulka for being passive. Staszewski threw up to Gomulka the fact that he had remained silent on the question of Yugoslavia and Titoism. Nine years later, Staszewski, as secretary of the Warsaw Party committee, was to take the lead in organizing pro-Gomulka demonstrations in the streets of the capital. He was also the chairman at the mass meeting where Gomulka made his first public appearance after being nominated General Secretary of the Party at the Eighth Plenum. But at the Third Plenum in 1949 Staszewski berated Gomulka venomously:

> "For months reactionaries all over the world praised Comrade Gomulka, and Comrade Gomulka remained silent. The traitor and spy Djilas openly declared that the Tito clique was depending on Comrade Gomulka. But it took Comrade Gomulka months to squeeze out a statement formally separating himself from the Tito clique. I say 'formally,' because Comrade Gomulka continued with the pretense that he could not understand the connection between the right-nationalist tendency, which he represented, and the treasonable theories of the Tito clique."

Edward Ochab's attack on Gomulka was very personal. In October 1956 Ochab was to display great courage and self-respect vis-à-vis the Soviet delegation headed by Nikita Khrushchev. Ochab was to yield his own position as First Secretary of the Party, the highest position in the Communist hierarchy, to

Wladyslaw Gomulka. Yet, at the Third Plenum he abused Gomulka as "a person of sickly ambitions, a megalomaniac, with an exaggerated sense of his own importance." Ochab went on:

> "Comrade Gomulka is allowing his tongue to run away with him, when, in trying to ward off the Party's rebuke, he asserts: 'I cannot be the enemy of that which I had a hand in creating.' Really, Comrade Gomulka has an exalted sense of his own importance. This is quite an original approach to the common achievements of the Party, the achievements of the millions of the Polish masses. In this case, Comrade Gomulka's arrogance has reached the height of ludicrousness. . . ."

After the October revolution Gomulka gave Jerzy Morawski, the leader of the Communist youth in Poland, control of all printed matter in Poland. But at the Third Plenum, Morawski too made a vicious personal attack on his future chief. Picking up where Ochab left off, Morawski cried out that: "In Comrade Gomulka's conception of things, his own welfare is more important than the Party line." Morawski also explicitly condemned General Spychalski for the "errors" in his army career.

The first of the defendants to reply to the charges against the Gomulka faction was General Marian Spychalski. This subtle intellectual, descendant of an old middle-class family and an architect by profession, adopted his accusers' primitive Party jargon in his "self-criticism." In fact, he repeated their crude formulations word for word, as though reciting a ritual of confession:

> "I shall perform my self-criticism with a feeling of deep guilt, because I was lacking in alertness and understanding of the danger of the right-nationalist tendency. . . . I shall perform my self-criticism with a feeling of guilt because it comes so late. From my case the comrades will be able to see the consequences of a lack of alertness and political blindness, the consequences of not understanding the nature of the class struggle, of not observing the collective methods of Party work and Party discipline, and of falling under the influence of opportunism and nationalism."

Spychalski then went on to self-flagellation for "failure" in his own family relations. His brother, formerly a professional officer in the Polish army, had been active during the Nazi occupation in the Armja Krajowa, or Home Army, and had been murdered

by the Gestapo. Even his martyrdom, however, had not cleared Spychalski's brother in the eyes of the Party inquisitors (the Armja Krajowa had been the instrument of the anti-Communist Polish Government-in-Exile in London). Consequently, Spychalski was required to perform an ideological post mortem purge on his assassinated brother. Spychalski complied; he admitted that the Party was right and that he had not been sufficiently "honest with the leadership of the Party." Spychalski also confessed to having erred by placing too much credence in the intellectuals. He had failed to grasp the extent of their danger:

> "Because of a failure in alertness on my part, my failure to apply the class approach properly, I treated the intellectual groups as though they were individuals rather than the organized gang set up to work against our organization that they actually were."

But the most important charges against Spychalski had to do with his army career. He did not try to defend himself or to deny these libels. On the contrary, he readily admitted that "under the pressure of nationalism" he had seriously erred in "quickly forcing out many fine Soviet specialists at a time when we did not have a sufficient number of devoted cadres of our own. As a result, officers from the old army were allowed to hold responsible positions, people with a reactionary past who masked their hostile attitude to our people's power."

Nor, Spychalski admitted, had he disassociated himself from Gomulka and Kliszko sharply enough:

> "I did not correctly estimate the position of Comrade Gomulka, because I did not have the necessary Marxist-Leninist training. Hence, I could not discriminate between that which was an expression of Comrade Gomulka's rightist tendency, his opportunism and nationalism, and that which was to be attributed to poor health and fatigue. In fact, however, it was only an expression of profound opportunism on my part, my fear of a further offensive in the class struggle against nationalism."

In concluding his "self-criticism" Spychalski declared his readiness "to help the Party as much as I can to unmask the gang that has insinuated itself into the state apparatus." Now he could see "in its entire scope, how wise, foresighted and providential has been the initiative of the Soviet Party headed by Comrade Stalin—

that initiative which was expressed by the Cominform's decision in the Yugoslavian question. . . . I am myself an example of how the enemy worked through a group with a right-nationalist tendency such as existed in our Party and whose spokesman was Comrade Gomulka. . . . But today our army has the assured and powerful leadership of Comrade Marshal Rokossovski." Submissively, Marian Spychalski admitted his personal inadequacy: "I was not mature enough in my political judgment." Finally, with deep humility he begged to be allowed to remain in the Party "so that I may at least partly correct my errors within the ranks."

Though their names were invariably linked with that of Gomulka, neither Spychalski nor Kliszko ever evinced the slightest sign of solidarity with him. On the contrary, they tried to show that their own hands were clean by laying all the "crimes" at Gomulka's door. It was, they cried in their confessions, the power of Gomulka's authority that had led them into their manifold errors. Zenon Kliszko went still further. At the end of his "self-criticism" he asserted:

> "The meaningful silence of Comrade Wieslaw (Gomulka) has represented continued resistance to the Party line. His obstinate silence must be interpreted as intended to provide a Party platform where the anti-Party elements could group themselves."

In complete contrast to the rest of the proceedings and speeches, both as to tone and style, Wladyslaw Gomulka's address in self-defense gives us the key to the personality and character of this significant Communist leader. First of all, Gomulka rejected his fellow defendants' attempt to make him the chief victim in a calculated plan to save the Party honor. This was a Soviet tactic that had been applied first in the Moscow trials of the Thirties and had been adopted for the trial of Laszlo Rajk in Budapest. Gomulka's stubborn insistence that the entire leadership of the Party had been responsible for its "lack of alertness" to the danger of spies and diversionists successfuly scotched this pretense. It is indicative of the man's character to note that when Gomulka returned to power after the Eighth Plenum he rejected all attempts to hold individuals accountable for past crimes—even for those crimes which had caused his own suffering.

Now, at the Third Plenum, Gomulka began by admitting that he had been the most outspoken exponent of the "right-nationalist tendency." He stressed, however, that a year and a half after the rise of the Tito controversy he had come to take a different view of the matter, his doubts as to the correctness of the Stalin line having been "shattered by the facts uncovered during the Rajk trial."

This confession by so honest and critical a Communist as Gomulka is fascinating evidence of the effectiveness of the Soviet strategy of staging trials. Apparently, they achieved their aim by hypnotizing and stampeding even the most hard-headed, independent-minded Party members. Gomulka was thoroughly taken in; he averred that now he perceived that his doubts concerning the correctness of the official Party line on the Tito controversy had been evidence that he himself was not "sufficiently far-sighted" and had not appreciated "the leading role of the Soviet Party."

However, this was as far as Gomulka would go in self-recrimination. He categorically denied that he had been responsible for the activity of any group of agents and members of pre-war Polish secret police who had infiltrated the Communist state apparatus and Party. True, he admitted, he had not been prudent in his dealings with the Lechowicz faction, but the comrades who were charging him with being remiss in that respect had been equally so. Gomulka was particularly effective in rebutting the claim that he had remained "silent" when he should have spoken:

> "I have made my self-criticism, as I understood it, as I felt it, to the best of my ability. Not a single word is superfluous. I have not tried to entrench myself behind any particular position. That's not my method of operating, that's not my character. Perhaps I am stubborn sometimes, perhaps very stubborn on some matters. But things I understand I talk about openly and courageously. There can be no talk of my having done anything under compulsion, or of my having made my self-criticism under compulsion."

Clearly perceiving where the Stalinist offensive in the Communist world was leading, Gomulka comprehended that anyone charged with a "tendency" differing in any way from the official Party line was through politically, and that no confession of integrity would help, no breast-beating, not even the taking of responsi-

bility for crimes one had never committed. So, with deep resignation, he added, "I am persuaded that my name has been crossed off the roster because of my errors and because of the way the Party has criticized my errors. . . ."

It was not until 1954, a full year after Stalin's death, that new winds began to blow in Poland and changes began to be made in the police apparatus and the legal system. A ministry for state control was established to investigate crimes in the Polish security police. Roman Zambrowski was entrusted with this ministry. He was also the first member of the Polish Communist Party's Politburo to raise the question of stopping compulsory agricultural collectivization. His daring brought Zambrowski into conflict with Moscow; the Soviet Communist Party persistently opposed his nomination as General Secretary of the Polish Communist Party, a candidacy put forward several times by the growing left wing of the Polish Party.

Moscow's opposition to Roman Zambrowski was particularly sharp at the Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party. This plenum took place in the fall of 1954, and Nikita Khrushchev was present as a guest. At the close of the Plenum, Zambrowski's candidacy was put forward. Khrushchev was able to restrain himself no longer. Disregarding elementary principles of tact, he burst forth in a protest against the proffer of so important a post to the Jew, Roman Zambrowski.

Khrushchev's protest made a terrible impression on the assembled members of the Polish Central Committee; several of them even left the hall in protest. Zambrowski was not elected at that time, but Nikita Khrushchev's intervention produced exactly the contrary effect of that which he desired. It hastened the movement, in which Zambrowski played an active role, to bring Gomulka back to power. It was Khrushchev's action at the Sixth Plenum which influenced Zambrowski to close ranks with Gomulka.

5

BEFORE THE EARTHQUAKE

IMMEDIATELY AFTER Stalin's death Polish writers set about exploding the Stalinist myth and exposing the lies and the crimes it concealed. The very writers who during the Stalinist period had passively or actively resisted the official efforts to transform literature into a political weapon became the most passionate in their use of literature as a weapon against the regime. This boomerang effect of Communist indoctrination was epitomized by the celebrated *Poem for Adults* by Adam Wazyk, published as early as August 1955 in the literary magazine *Nowa Kultura.* The poem gave expression to the simmering revolt among Polish intellectuals. This revolt was not so much against the Communist system itself as it was against the things that had made that system a dull, sloganistic, spiritually barren way of life and against the literature that was by superior order confined to panegyrics of industrialization and collectivization.

Wazyk's reputation had been that of an esoteric poet writing in an obscure and hyper-modern style, but in *Poem for Adults* he used plain and simple language. The poem is about 300 lines long and has the character of an improvisation. In classically rhymed stanzas alternated with passages in free verse, the poet voices his disappointment with the realities of present-day Poland:

> Fourier prophesied that in his Utopia
> The ocean will flow with lemonade.
> Well, hasn't the promise been kept?
>
> We drink sea water
> And we say, "It's lemonade."
> Then we sneak home
> To vomit in secret.

We speak for those who work:
We demand keys to fit our locks,
Rooms with windows,
Walls that do not sweat with dampness,
Hatred for official papers,
Reverence for the precious time of men,
Safe streets for those who return from work . . .

During a meeting I had with Adam Wazyk in Warsaw, the poet told me how the poem was conceived. In Wazyk's own words:

"The idea for this poem developed out of notes I kept for a long time—notes representing a kind of chronicle and brief history of the developments in our life and in my own personal surroundings. . . . Here in Poland the poem's influence testifies to the Polish people's thirst for honest criticism of the mistakes and the black side of our national life. The young people are particularly avid for such open criticism on matters where silence has been the rule. Now, Poland is a Catholic country where the Messianic aspirations of our national poets are still a vital part of the popular spirit. There is a conflict here between modern atheism and deep-seated religious sentiments. That is one side of the picture. The other side is a conflict between the liberal and the dogmatic forces inside religious life, paralleling the same conflict inside the Communist Party. The peasants are against the kolkhozes; the religious conservatives against civil marriage. But this does not mean that the people of Poland as a whole want to go back to old social forms and institutions. What they do want is to root out the bad features of present-day life in this country, the irrationalities of bureaucracy, the terror and limitation on personal freedom."

The same theme lay behind a poem that the famous poet-dramatist Antoni Slonimski published several weeks before Wazyk's *Poem for Adults*. Slonimski's *Poetic Manifesto* appeared in *Zycie Warsawy*, Poland's largest daily newspaper. The author cries out:

Painter! Throw more colors on your palette . . .
Down with those trashy icons
Whose only virtue was their power
To conceal the even trashier architecture
On which they were displayed.

We want the right to gripe,
To joke,
To hold some high-placed dignitaries up to ridicule.
Wit is a weapon;
We should not be punished
For possessing it illegally.

The Polish writers took advantage of the partial restoration of freedom at the end of the Stalin era to give vent to the anger they had accumulated through the years when they were unable to express themselves freely. Poland was the first Iron Curtain country to disseminate the secret speech in which Nikita Khrushchev attacked Stalin's reputation. The Polish Communist leaders who had attended the Twentieth Communist Congress in Moscow in February 1956 brought back with them not only Khrushchev's address but also the remains of their First Secretary, Boleslaw Bierut. He had died of a heart attack believed to have been brought on by Khrushchev's catalogue of the crimes in the Stalin regime. To squelch rumors that Bierut had committed suicide, that he had been murdered and that his body had been mutilated, his body lay in state for days while a steady stream of mourners—and doubting Thomases—filed past his bier. It was this grisly spectacle that precipitated Poland's "earthquake," to adopt the term which is used not only by the emigré press but also by the press in Poland itself.

The bitterest condemnations of the period of Stalinism in Poland came from the remnants of old guard Communists who had endured the hell of Soviet concentration camps and from the leaders of the student groups in the Communist Party. The long-repressed feelings of Polish intellectuals found their strangest public expression during the Nineteenth Culture Session, which took place in Warsaw in March 1956. In the Palace of Culture, a monstrosity of Soviet wedding-cake architecture, the Polish writers and artists indicted Stalin's regime for first destroying the creative instinct in Soviet Russia and then systematically stifling it in other Communist countries.

The discussion was opened by the critic Jan Kott whose address "Mythology and the Truth" was a scathing attack on Party-line Socialist realism, whose only purpose, he said, was to gloss over the

crimes of the regime. "A literature that is forbidden to speak of these crimes, a literature that remains silent about trials which have roused the consciences of the world," Kott contended, "must sink deeper and deeper in lies and more and more into a perverted vision of reality. . . . For human conscience and for artistic creativeness these were dark years. Many of us who lived through them will spend the rest of our lives atoning for the moral consent we gave to these misdeeds."

The poet Antoni Slonimski went even further: "Our mistakes of the past, we are told, lie in hewing to the cult of the individual. . . . The cult of the individual is not responsible; it is a political system which enables individual human beings to wreak such havoc."

The young writer Witold Wirprza was particularly outspoken in his denunciation of the lying and the crimes that have been tolerated in the Communist Party. "Was there ever a moment in my life," he has asked, "when I was truly convinced that the heroes of the Moscow trials (of the 1930's) were traitors and agents of Fascism? No, I always had doubts about their guilt. Perhaps not doubts so much as feelings of uneasiness. In large measure, I repressed this uneasiness as I would swallow gall; yet I kept on draining larger and bitterer drafts."

The writer Arthur Sandauer warned his audience in the Palace of Culture that repentance alone was not enough. "If we must accept the principle that the machine can only be repaired by the man who wrecked it, then we are lost."

The revolt of the intellectuals encouraged the workers to make demands to alleviate their misery and to increase their wages beyond the hunger level, but their demands were ignored by the bureaucrats. When the workers finally exhausted their patience, they precipitated the Poznan riots of June 1956. The trials of the Poznan rioters mirrored the change which had been wrought in Poland by the revolt of the intellectuals. The accused turned into accusers, and the defense ceased to be a mockery as in years gone by. An interesting illustration of how deeply the intellectuals' revolt had penetrated Poland was the fact that the defense called on the great sociologist Professor Josef Chalasinski to be a witness. Two years earlier Chalasinski had lifted his powerful voice against

the Communist domination of science. He had asked whether Marxism and Stalinism had enough philosophic content to insure the fullest development of modern man; and then he had advanced the theory that Marxism had to be complemented by metaphysical concepts capable of gratifying the emotions and imagination of man.

The rebels in the Polish Communist Party did not restrict themselves to cultural issues but were attacking the economic policies of Soviet colonialism in Poland. Three weeks before the October revolt the writer Wladyslaw Bienkowski, now the Minister of Education, published an article in *Przeglad Kulturalny* (September 28, 1956) with the sarcastic title "Moon Economy and Earthly Matters," attacking the leading theoreticians of Stalinist agricultural policy. With biting irony, Bienkowski satirized the official tomes on agriculture because they contain hundreds of pages of statistics that serve only to befog the subjects they attempt to clarify. "These tomes illustrate the old truth," wrote Bienkowski, "that statistics are like courtesans who know how to give every man what he seeks." Bienkowski's prime complaint was that the government's policy on agriculture was dictated by political rather than by economic considerations.

On the very day that Khrushchev and his cohorts arrived in Warsaw to intervene against Gomulka's access to power, the *Nowa Kultura* published a daring article by Zygmund Florczak entitled "Talks with the West." "What do we mean today by the slogan 'Workers of the World Unite'?" Florczak asked. "It is a slogan that has no meaning today. Try to appeal to the workers of Australia with it. Would you ask them to share the lot of the Polish worker? Wages in Australia are so high that the workers have no desire to fight for a higher living standard. In Poland, on the other hand, the workers have to resort to armed revolt for nothing more than the barest necessities of life . . ."

6

THE EIGHTH PLENUM

EARLY FRIDAY MORNING, October 19, 1956, after a night of fantastic rumors of a putsch by the Natolin group and the massing of Soviet troops around Warsaw, the Eighth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' (Communist) Party opened. The more than 200 members and alternates of the Central Committee from all over the country included the first Communist leaders of the Gomulka faction to be released from prison. Not all the Plenum participants knew of the extraordinary developments then already in full career. Nor could they have foreseen that Wladyslaw Gomulka, sitting in one of the back rows in a remote corner of the hall, would soon be seated up front at the head of the Party.

The session was opened by Edward Ochab, the First Secretary of the Party. To everyone's astonishment, Ochab stated that, due to extraordinary developments, it would be impossible to proceed with the agenda as planned. Nervously he reported that "a delegation from the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, headed by Comrades Khrushchev, Kaganovich, Mikoyan, and Molotov" had just arrived at the Warsaw airfield, and "wished to hold immediate conversations with the Politburo of our Party."

Consequently, Ochab proposed that proceedings be postponed until that evening at six to allow the Politburo members to get to the airfield to meet the Soviet delegation. At the same time, moreover, he proposed that before recessing, the Plenum agree to enlarge the Central Committee with four new members: Wladyslaw Gomulka, Marian Spychalski, Loga-Sowinski and Zenon Kliszko. Finally, Ochab suggested that "Gomulka, who is proposed as the

First Secretary of the Party, be included in the delegation to negotiate with the Soviet leaders."

This surprise move was due to the personal initiative of Jozef Cyrankiewicz, Prime Minister of Poland since 1947 and throughout the entire period of Stalinist terror. Cyrankiewicz, correctly gauging the popular agitation in Poland, foresaw that Gomulka would be the only man able to unite the vast majority of the Polish people. Consequently, Cyrankiewicz exerted pressure on Ochab to pass the Party leadership to Gomulka at the Plenum rather than wait for the Party Congress. At first Ochab resisted; but when Cyrankiewicz threatened to resign, Ochab yielded.

Having gotten wind of this understanding, the Stalinist Natolin group had alerted Moscow and had prepared to carry out a putsch of its own. The Stalinists were then ready to arrest more than 700 writers, journalists, and active Party workers during the night of October 18, using certain groups they controlled within the Security Police. This would assure victory at the Plenum the next morning, for the Stalinists were confident of receiving the blessing of the Soviet "collective leadership" headed by Khrushchev.

The night of October 18 was a "night of vigil" in Warsaw. In the struggle between the two Communist factions, the overwhelming majority of the Polish people, including the elite cadres of factory workers, the university students and the Polish army soldiers, lined up with Gomulka. They prevented the Natolin group from creating any provocation that would justify the intervention of the Soviet armed divisions stationed in Poland.

The Polish veterans of the Spanish Civil War, who occupied important positions in government bodies, industry and army divisions stationed all over Poland, were called to Warsaw by their former commander in Spain, General Waclaw Komar. Komar, just recently released from prison, had returned to his army post. He now led the veterans of the Dombrowski Brigade in Spain to guard the Party building where the Eighth Plenum was being held. He also planned strategy for the Warsaw garrison of the Polish army. The garrison occupied the most important arteries of the capital in readiness to resist any armed intervention.

The Warsaw Party committee, headed by the energetic Stefan Staszewski and controlled by the pro-Gomulka faction, mobilized

the civilian population politically. Its best speakers went to the factories and universities to prevent provocative actions that might furnish the Soviet divisions with a convenient pretext for armed intervention. They also ran meetings which passed resolutions in favor of Gomulka.

What transpired at the first meeting between Nikita Khrushchev and Wladyslaw Gomulka at the airfield as well as the stormy negotiations which were later held in the Belvedere Palace between the representatives of Poland and those of Soviet Russia are only partially described in the official report of the Party Plenum. But there were enough witnesses on both occasions; the very same day all the details of Khrushchev's furious outbursts were broadcast. Khrushchev shouted at the Polish delegation that met him at the airfield, "We have come to stop you from handing your country over to the Americans and Zionists. Our Red Army has shed its blood for your country." Then, seeing Gomulka, Khrushchev shouted, "What is that traitor doing here?"

Ochab replied that the Polish people had shed blood of its own; as for Gomulka, Ochab asked Comrade Khrushchev to respect the new member of the Politburo, who was slated for the position of First Secretary of the Party. The news about Gomulka came as a fearful surprise to Khrushchev and company. They had come to Warsaw with the explicit purpose of putting the Natolin group in power. From the airfield both delegations drove to the Belvedere Palace, once the residence of the Polish Marshal Jozef Pilsudski and now used as a guest house for important foreign visitors. At the Belvedere Khrushchev resumed his insults, banging on the table and making all kinds of dire threats. Finally, Mikoyan intervened and led Khrushchev from the table. He talked to Khrushchev in a low voice for a long time in a corner. Khrushchev then returned to the table and suddenly smiled broadly. Putting out his hand to Gomulka, he asked to be forgiven. Then the real business of the official visit began.

It was Ochab who served as the spokesman for the Polish delegation during the first phase of the negotiations. He had always passed as an adherent of the pro-Moscow line; but during the last few months, particularly after the unrest in Poznan, Ochab had shifted his stand on Soviet Russia. He reacted to Khrushchev's

threats with a decisiveness that amazed his comrades. Ochab gave vent to the Polish Party leaders' complaints against Soviet Russia, warning that the 28,000,000 citizens of Poland were in a dangerously angry mood.

There were mutual recriminations, and no progress was made for several hours. The Polish delegation began to suspect that Khrushchev's constant repetition of the same arguments were a time-winning device. At one point a special messenger came in with a note for Ochab: Soviet armies under Marshal Konev, the so-called "Warsaw Pact" armies, were now massed in the approaches to Warsaw. Ochab consulted briefly with his colleagues and then reported the contents of the note to the Soviet "guests." Ochab announced that the Polish delegation refused to continue negotiations at bayonet point. Since the hour was late and the next session of the Plenum was due to be convened at six o'clock, the Polish delegation left the Belvedere. They were anxious to inform the waiting members of the Central Committee of what had happened.

Ochab's report to the Plenum was very brief: "There were several hours of discussion between our Politburo and the Soviet delegation. The discussion dealt with the fundamental questions involving relations between our respective states and parties and the development of the present situation in Poland which has caused a feeling of deep unrest in our comrades from the Soviet Union." Ochab conceded straight out that the "Soviet comrades apparently decided to fly to Warsaw at the last moment, and they wish to return home as soon as possible." Since talks had to be continued that night, Ochab proposed that the next session of the Plenum be postponed until ten o'clock next morning. Cyrankiewicz amended the resolution to read "until eleven o'clock to give us more time."

"That night, nobody slept in Warsaw," begins Juliusz Zulawski's poem describing these historic October days of 1956 in Poland. The poem provides a stirring description of the mood that prevailed in Warsaw that Friday night, October 19th, when the crystal chandeliers were burning in every room of the Belvedere Palace. In the streets outside and in Lazienki Park thousands of people were gathered, waiting tremulously for the outcome of the

negotiations and asking one another in despair whether the meeting would end in a new hopeless Warsaw uprising, the ruins of which still scar parts of the city.

There are many descriptions of what happened that night. Characteristic is an article by the author Wiktor Woroszylski, former editor of the leading literary magazine *Nowa Kultura*, entitled "Four Days that Shook Poland"—an allusion to the famous book by the American reporter John Reed about the October 1917 revolution in Russia, *Ten Days that Shook the World*. Woroszylski's article begins:

> "They were different days; they were almost tragic days. The same forces of reaction that had always opposed our struggle for democracy, feeling their downfall inevitable, were ready to employ the vilest means."

Much is known now of what happened at the negotiations in the Belvedere Palace; the details throw an interesting light on the distribution of roles among the Kremlin rulers at the time. Molotov was the only one of them who never said a word. Every now and then he sent a note to Mikoyan, who passed it along to Khrushchev with a message of his own. Kaganovich only spoke once—to support Khrushchev's warning that the Russians would use force if the new Polish leadership insisted on deposing Marshal Rokossovski. At one point, when it seemed that negotiations were breaking off and Khrushchev had flown into a literally hysterical rage, Mikoyan took over the chair and continued as the spokesman for the Soviet delegation to the end. Mikoyan then asserted that the movement of Soviet troops toward Warsaw was being halted, but he continued to demand that the Natolin group headed by Rokossovski keep their posts.

All this time, while the dramatic negotiations were taking place, workers and university students were holding meetings in Warsaw and other important centers of the country. Resolutions supporting Gomulka and demands for greater freedom and sovereignty for Poland kept pouring into the Belvedere. At the same time workers' councils were elected in factories to remove control from the hands of the Party bureaucrats. This was a spontaneous realization of the idea of greater rights for industrial workers and more participation

on their part in the management of factories. The demonstrations by workers and university students had created a situation in which the Soviet army found itself face to face with unarmed civilians. This passive resistance proved far more effective than would have been any attempt at armed resistance.

Negotiations between the Polish and Soviet leaders in the Belvedere Palace lasted until six o'clock Saturday morning, October 20. Khrushchev and his cohorts immediately drove to the Okecie airfield and flew to Moscow in the special Soviet bomber that had brought them to Warsaw. The Polish delegation continued to confer, preparing a report for the Party Plenum session due to open at eleven o'clock that morning. They had only a few hours of rest after a tense and disputatious night.

When the Plenum opened, Alexander Zawadzki, the Chairman of the State Council, delivered the report. Zawadzki began with a statement explaining why the Soviet mission had come to Warsaw:

> "The Soviet comrades gave their deep unrest at recent developments in Poland as the reason for their sudden arrival at this juncture. They were particularly concerned over the forms that anti-Soviet propaganda, rampant in our midst, was taking and by our failure to react, or our failure to react with sufficient vigor, to that propaganda."

Zawadzki went on to state that the members of the Soviet delegation had been quite put out because the composition of the new leadership of the Polish Party "had been known to everyone except our Soviet comrades, whom we had not informed." Zawadzki's comment on the atmosphere of the negotiations was:

> "The discussion was partisan, involving matters of principle, with frequent displays of temperament by both sides, undoubtedly with the best of intentions. We made every effort to soothe our Soviet comrades' suspicions of our intentions and actions, as well as their doubts over our internal situation and mutual relations. We made every effort to explain to our Soviet comrades the process of democratization taking place in our midst, and to point out that the past cannot be revived."

In conclusion, Zawadzki advised the Plenum that an understanding had been arrived at and that a delegation composed of the new Polish Party leadership would go to Moscow to conduct

negotiations toward a fuller understanding. Alexander Zawadzki's report failed to satisfy the Party leaders assembled. They began by posing questions about the Soviet troop movements. Those taking part in the Plenum knew, without being told, what had happened at the negotiations—this became clear from the questions that flooded the hall.

Artur Starewicz began the questioning. "From comrades who were in charge of internal order" he had learned that "several tank divisions moved toward Warsaw and that there were Soviet unit movements on the western frontier and in the Wroclaw area." Starewicz's question was really directed at Marshal Rokossovski, present at the Plenum: "For what purpose, and at whose command did these army movements take place, provoking unease in Warsaw and possibly leading to international consequences?"

The author Jerzy Putrament, formerly Polish Ambassador to France, picked this up and amplified the question:

> "We have a State Authority, we have a Committee for Security Affairs, we have a Ministry for National Defense and a Ministry for Internal Affairs. This is their function, and they must know what is happening in the country and in their areas. . . . Can there be military movements that the Ministry for Defense knows nothing about? Here we have the ministry heads; one of them can tell us what is happening to the divisions, and another whether those divisions are on the move. The Central Committee must be informed of this."

This was a direct challenge to Marshal Rokossovski, and Ochab gave the Marshal the floor immediately. At first Rokossovski attributed the troop movements to the usual autumn maneuvers, but then he added:

> "We remember the Poznan incidents and the lies circulated at the time. When we were convinced they were no more than lies, we were calm, although we did have to bring the military into Poznan. Now again we have an abnormal situation of demoralization. Suspicion has grown. I will not develop the thought further—"

Some ivory tower observers on the outside have tried to characterize Rokossovski as a tragic figure suffering from a split personality, torn between the conflicting claims of soldierly loyalty to the

Red Army and love for his native Poland. But those who know the Marshal's past and have observed him close up reject this theory. Even the bitterest Polish foes of the Soviet Union acknowledge Rokossovski's immense contributions to the organization and technical training of the Polish army from 1949 to 1956. At the same time, however, he purged the Polish army of its native officers and replaced them with Soviet officers of Polish birth or with Polish-sounding names.

Apparently Stalin was right when he guessed that a Russified Pole who had once been suspected of nationalist inclinations would be the best man to clean pro-Gomulka elements out of the Polish army, for Rokossovski carried out his mission with tremendous zeal. First, he discharged all the veterans of the Spanish Civil War. Then he set up a so-called "Polish Army Military Information" unit—actually, an espionage apparatus composed almost exclusively of Soviet personnel. Military Information was charged with applying Stalinist terrorist tactics to Poland and staging military trials. In this procedure Rokossovski faithfully adhered to the Stalin line despite, or perhaps because of, the fact that he himself had been a victim of the Stalin terror after the Moscow trials of the late 1930's.

With the liquidation of Marshal Tukhatchevski, when Stalin's ambition to build a Greater Russian Communist monolith by absorbing all other nations had reached the point of madness, the dictator's suspicions fell on Constantin Rokossovski. This was in 1938—the same year that Stalin dissolved the Polish Communist Party. Rokossovski had maintained his contacts with the leaders of the Polish Communist Party since the Polish-Russian war of 1919. Stalin kept Rokossovski under deportation until 1941, the very eve of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. But in 1944 Stalin entrusted Rokossovski with the leadership of the Red Army that was supposed to "liberate" Poland. Soviet Russia was perturbed by the spirit of national resistance that was beginning to develop in the Polish army and the Polish Communist Party; General Spychalski was removing Soviet officers from the Polish army and sending them home. At this point, Moscow put on the farcical act of returning to Poland its glorious son who had attained the rank of a Soviet marshal. The commander of Soviet troops on the

Soviet-German front, Rokossovski simultaneously took over the post of Polish Defense Minister, exchanging a Soviet red star for a Polish white eagle. The joke made the rounds that Poland had really done a very good stroke of business: instead of having to provide Soviet uniforms for a half million Polish soldiers, it was more economical to order one Polish uniform for a Soviet marshal. Marshal Rokossovski's dual role as a Soviet proconsul in a Polish uniform called forth a great deal of bitterness among Communist activists as well as anti-Communists.

No wonder, then, that Rokossovski was the focal point for the sharpest conflict between the Gomulka faction and the pro-Moscow Natolin group at the historic Eighth Plenum. The majority of the Party leadership aligned itself with Gomulka in opposition to Rokossovski. In doing this they were in agreement with the popular attitude; the Marshal was generally regarded in Poland both as the symbol of Soviet domination and as the embodiment of a Polish traitor zealously loyal to Moscow. Poland had been suffering under the Russian yoke for more than 150 years and had known many similar cases of Russified Poles serving their Russian masters in the most brutal fashion.

Because the Natolin group was convinced immediately after the first session of the Eighth Plenum that it had lost the battle for power, it immediately changed tactics and began supporting Gomulka in the hope of saving Rokossovski's place. But the great majority of the Plenum came out in favor of discharging Rokossovski from the Politburo—a step which naturally would lead to his resignation as Defense Minister. A couple of days after Rokossovski's defeat at the Eighth Plenum the epilogue to his farce was played in Moscow. There the dismissed Polish Defense Minister donned his old Soviet marshal's uniform again to be raised to the position of Soviet Vice-Minister for Defense.

On the other hand, though Moscow backed up its military proconsul from the Stalin period, it sacrificed its political one—Jakub Berman, formerly Vice-Premier and member of the Politburo. Berman's confession at the Eighth Plenum revealed the deep personal drama of a Communist judged guilty by everyone. Berman based his defense on previously unknown facts. He had, he insisted, been constantly in conflict with the apparatus of Rokos-

sovski's Military Information; he had refused to permit political trials in Poland like those that had been fabricated in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and Stalin had wanted his head for that. Berman's revelations had very little effect on the Plenum. He was bitterly attacked, particularly by his cronies from the Natolin group. They flung themselves at Berman and the other Jews who were important in the Stalinist regime in Poland—men like Hilary Minc and Eugeniusz Szyr. The Natolin group expected that Gomulka and his friends who had been in prison for years during Berman's regime would be the first to take their revenge. At the same time, the Natolin group hoped to satisfy Moscow by staging a number of sensational trials, diverting the Polish people's wrath from Moscow to the tragic, surviving remnant of Polish Jewry.

Although other members of his group did assail Jakub Berman, Gomulka, understanding Moscow's underhand purpose in the machinations of the Natolin group, said not a single word against Berman throughout the Eighth Plenum. The Gomulka-faction critics of Berman refused to fall into the anti-Semitic trap of the Natolin group. Stressing Berman's personal responsibility for the terror during his regime, the Gomulka faction made it quite clear that the source of the crimes lay in Moscow and the Stalinist system and rejected the Natolin group's agitation for public trials.

Jakub Berman began his confession of "errors" with an analysis of the four years from 1949 to 1953 that represented the high point of the Stalin terror in Poland. Then he emphasized that it was necessary "to go down deep to the source of the evil, so as to make certain that such terrible events will never recur." Berman averred that he had opposed the arrest of various military and political figures on false charges, principally Wladyslaw Gomulka and General Marian Spychalski. Berman named the two Soviet agents who had ordered Spychalski arrested—Skolbuszewski and Woznesenski, experts in Rokossovski's Military Information Office that had fabricated all the charges.

> "I rejected demands for a bill of particulars against Comrade Spychalski several times on the grounds that they were spurious and exaggerated. I never spared the slightest effort to get at the truth and prevent any terrible error from occurring. I was also against the arrest of Comrade Gomulka all the time. He was arrested on the

basis of provocations that emerged during the trial against General Tatar. I never believed that Comrade Gomulka had participated in any conspiracy whatsoever, and I demanded concrete proof."

Berman went on to stress that his resistance had made him the object of "strong suspicion, for I had worked closely with Comrade Spychalski in the past. It is easy to imagine to what methods Comrade Spychalski would have been exposed had his investigation been taken over by Military Information as was the case with Comrade Korupieski, who, as is well known, was sentenced to death." But General Korupieski's sentence was not carried out; he now has a leading position in the Polish Army alongside Generals Spychalski and Komar. It may well be that Moscow dropped Jakub Berman because he prevented the physical liquidation of these men and other military and political figures now in power.

The thread running through Berman's apologia, both in his speech at the Eighth Plenum and in the written statement he sent to the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party, was his opposition to staging trials like those of Laszlo Rajk in Budapest and Rudolf Slanski in Prague. He wrote:

> "The fact that Comrades Gomulka and Spychalski were imprisoned is a painful piece of injustice. But after this particularly difficult period was over we were able to save the People's Government from committing the worst kind of errors which could never have been rectified. . . . As to Komar, Leder and other comrades, never, from the very beginning, did I believe the charges leveled at them. I remember the 'revelations' presented by Military Information on Christmas eve, 1953. Resorting to ugly methods they libeled a number of members of the Politburo and the Central Committee."

Berman's confession contains a clear indication that the trials that Rokossovski's Military Information planned to stage in Poland at Moscow's orders had anti-Jewish undertones. Berman uses only one phrase, but it is packed with meaning:

> "All this took place under the very difficult circumstances of those days, and we must remember that the report about the doctors [the Jewish doctors in the Soviet Union charged with 'cutting short the lives of active public figures of the Soviet Union through the sabotage of medical treatment'] appeared on June 13."

An interesting sidelight to Berman's confession was provided by sensational details about the arrest of Noel Field. A former official of the United States Department of State, Field disappeared behind the Iron Curtain in 1949, spent more than five years in Communist prisons and is now in Hungary. This is Berman's version of the remarkable story:

> "Noel Field was in Poland in 1948 and tried to talk to me. But I refused to see him, not knowing him. He then got a letter through to me through a member of my secretariat, Comrade Anna Duracz. He had met her in Paris in 1945 when she had got out of camp and was being helped by the relief organization that Noel Field belonged to. Comrade Duracz considered Noel Field to be an idealistic, honest man. That was how she described him to me, so I accepted the letter. Field's letter attempted to clarify certain suspicions that had fallen on him with the aim of eventually removing them. Field also demanded recognition for his work in antifascist movements in the past. Naturally, I could do nothing about this. In 1949 Noel Field was named a master spy for America during the trial of Rajk in Hungary. He confessed his letter to me and his acquaintance with Anna Duracz dating back to 1945. Beria and Stalin heard about this; from that moment agitation and accusations of espionage and betrayal swirled around my office. Stalin personally intervened in the matter of Anna Duracz. I opposed her arrest till the very end. I was deeply convinced of her innocence, though I could not say how much truth lay in the charges against Noel Field. Comrade Bierut defended me devotedly against espionage accusations for years—the pressure was constantly resumed."

Lapot and Ruminski, two members of the Natolin group, questioned Berman's revelation of the Beria-Stalin attempt to incriminate him as a spy. Berman replied with bitter irony:

> "Comrades Lapot and Ruminski may have their doubts, but we know very well the fate of all those who were accused of having any contact whatsoever with Field in 1949 or later. There is no doubt that if Comrade Bierut had not defended me so obstinately, the best I could hope for today would be exhuming."

This was an allusion to Laszlo Rajk, the murdered Hungarian Foreign Minister, who was "rehabilitated" on the verge of the Budapest uprising, his body being exhumed from the prison grave and reburied in a place of honor.

One thing Jakub Berman passed over in his account of Noel

Field and Stalin's personal intervention in Anna Duracz's arrest was the "Jewish factor" characteristic of the Soviet anti-Semitism of the period. Anna Duracz came from a respected Jewish family in Warsaw. She is the wife of the Polish Communist youth leader Jerzy Duracz, who is the son of Teodor Duracz, the famous Polish trial lawyer who defended the most prominent Communist leaders. After Anna's arrest, the Polish Security Police exerted pressure on Jerzy Duracz to divorce his Jewish wife so she could be tried under her Jewish name. But Jerzy Duracz refused, thus holding up the trial for a time. In 1955 Anna Duracz was freed.

Berman did not completely absolve himself of guilty participation in the crimes of the Stalin period. He admitted that he too often "fell victim of somewhat paranoiac suspiciousness and similar complexes," though he had made "every possible effort to get at the truth. Naturally, it will be said that I used half-measures. That is true; but was there any other way of saving human lives during this wild Beria period under the dominant Stalin cult?"

Berman considers the chief error of his regime to have been the implicit trust he put in the police system and his advisors and colleagues in the Security Police, "old childhood friends. That is why such revolting things could take place under my very eyes without my knowing about them." (One such childhood friend was Jacek Rozanski, of ill repute, who was sentenced to fifteen years in prison in the winter of 1957.)

But Berman was not allowed to shift the burden of his guilt to his "childhood friends" so easily. The old Socialist leader Leon Wudzki moved the heart of every member of the Central Committee who still had a conscience with his statement at the historic Eighth Plenum.

> "Many comrades," Wudzki said, "now blame 'the system' for everything. That's wrong, because people create systems and can change them. People have the choice of not accepting a system; perhaps we were compelled from the outside to accept this system, but at least we could have changed it, modifying it to fit our circumstances."

Unfortunately, Wudzki went on, most of the Communist leaders had made no attempt at all to change the system. Those who dared try "were broken, thrown into prison as enemies and

traitors; those who tried to conduct themselves like human beings were expelled, discharged or left the Party of their own accord. At any rate, we didn't have many people like that. The majority made peace with the system, building a cozy, warm nest where they could suckle at the full breast of the Beria system—and suckling, grew drunk with power and all the prerequisites and privileges that come with power."

Leon Wudzki's first personal attacks were on two leaders of the Stalin period who had at that time followed the Moscow line of putting the Party above everything else; now, in the new political constellation they were enemies. They were Hilary Minc, formerly Premier and economic dictator of Poland, and Franciszek Jozwiak, head of the pro-Moscow Natolin group, notorious for his anti-Semitic excursions within the Communist Party itself.

Jakub Berman had been at pains to build up a picture of Boleslaw Bierut, the Party's first General Secretary and former President of the State, as a man with a conscience. Wudzki smashed that legend. He had, he said, beaten on Bierut's door for months in vain attempts to offer evidence of crimes being committed against worthy Party leaders and activists. Wudzki offered instances of police brutality:

> "People were seized in the street; after seven days of 'examination' they were let out of prison broken, unfit to live. They had to be put in madhouses. Then there were cases of people deliberately hiding in the madhouses to keep out of the hands of the police. People pretended to be mad. Honest people fled the country in confusion and panic, simply to save themselves from the system. There was a method to this madness; these methods taken together created a system. They were applied from top to bottom of our society.
>
> "Comrade Berman has given us his self-criticism. His defense is that there was no real comradeship, that he did not know what was happening and that he was not properly attentive. Comrade Berman belonged to the Politburo Commission for Security Matters; did he know nothing about what was going on there? All the city knew that people were being murdered; all the city knew there were penal cells where prisoners were kept week after week, up to their ankles in human excrement. All the city knew that Rozanski was personally ripping the nails out of peoples' fingers; all the city knew that people were being drenched in cold water and then put

> outdoors in freezing weather—but Comrade Berman, the member of the Commission for Security, knew nothing about it! . . . I ask you, Comrade Berman, who but you should have known all about it? And didn't you really know how Anna Duracz, your secretary, was being treated? Why, you knew every detail. For two years Teodor Duracz's entire family pleaded with Comrade Berman to have pity, to save her—but Comrade Berman insisted he could do nothing."

Then Wudzki described Jakub Berman's nasty role in Stalinizing Polish literature by naming the famous writer Andrzej Stawar who had been persecuted by the Pilsudski regime before the war. Berman had compelled Stawar to beat his breast in public for supposed deviations from the Party line.

But the high point in Wudzki's unmasking of Berman's "confession" came when he reminded Berman of his stand on the trial of Laszlo Rajk, the Hungarian foreign minister.

> "All else aside, Comrade Berman, I still remember your public statement after the Rajk trial; you threatened that you were going to look for Rajks in our ranks, too. This was at a special session of our Central Committee held to demonstrate our solidarity with the hangmen of Rajk."

This was apparently too much even for the historic days of October. Edward Ochab, the Plenum's chairman, stopped the speaker on the pretext that his time had run out. But Wudzki had the last word:

> "Only one conclusion can be drawn from all this: either, Comrade Berman, you really did not know what was going on in the Security Police, and you are not fit to hold any post at all. Or else, if you did know, the Party must draw the inevitable, far-reaching conclusions."

The four days that shook Poland to its foundations also radically altered the mood and the behavior of the Communist leaders. Suddenly they cast off their masks, liberated from the fears that had paralyzed them. This was particularly evident in the cases of Edward Ochab and Marian Spychalski who represented opposing camps within the Communist Party of Poland. The same Spychalski who had submissively begged his comrades for pity at the Third

Plenum suddenly spoke up like a proud, free man at the Eighth Plenum. He called the Party leaders to account for continuing, even as late as 1955, two years after Stalin's death, to accuse him of being the "prime figure in diversion and treason." Sarcastically, Spychalski enumerated the Party's excellent qualities:

> "In our Party dogmatism was the rule in theory, impracticability in practice, dearth in ideology, slavishness in politics. We have contradiction between word and deed, a system of rule by ukase and monkey-like mimicry in culture. . . . No wonder that in this situation the Party has had to resort to the whole filthy arsenal of chicanery, provocation, lies. . . ."

Rejecting the confession forced on him at the Third Plenum that he had committed "errors" in the army, Spychalski demanded an investigation of the criminal policy introduced in the army after 1949; that is, after the Third Plenum, when Rokossovski became defense minister and, "victimized a number of people who have not yet been compensated."

Spychalski's former opponent, Ochab, on the other hand, had played the role of the accusing angel at the Third Plenum. Now, at the Eighth Plenum, he told openly of the disillusionment with Soviet Russia and the Soviet army that had overwhelmed many ardent Communists.

> "In the last few months I, of all people I, have been feeling more bitter than ever in my life. . . . Who could have imagined that I would find myself hearing people once imbued with enthusiasm for the victory of Communism, now arriving at the disillusioned conclusion that the Central Committee had to be protected from the Soviet army? . . . And I could sense the bitterness in our Soviet comrades' reproach that 'your press has printed articles more disrespectful of Soviet Russia than any that would possibly be published even in so bourgeois a country as Finland.' Nor could I ever have conceived that articles mocking our country's achievements would appear in the Soviet press. I refer particularly to the not very clever, really dangerous piece that appeared in *Pravda,* full of false statements and drawing ill-intentioned conclusions from a few errors in our press."

Ochab went on to warn the Party against using the methods in Poland that are practiced in Soviet Russia:

> "They are obstinately resisting a spontaneous rejection of the old methods there [in Soviet Russia]. . . . In our situation we must act with more daring, more consistency, faster than we have so far."

Gomulka's first open declaration at the Eighth Plenum was an extraordinary surprise to everyone, particularly the pro-Moscow group. He spoke for three hours, citing facts and statistics on the catastrophic situation of the Polish economy. Gomulka's grasp of the concrete state of affairs was clear evidence that during the six years he had spent in prison he had kept his fingers on the pulse of Poland, anticipating those developments which had led to the revolt against Moscow. Gomulka spoke bitterly about the slave system introduced in the Polish coal industry as a direct consequence of the Soviet policy of bleeding Poland's natural resources.

It was terms involving Polish coal which precipitated the October revolt and served as an important factor in inducing Edward Ochab to hand over the reins of leadership of the Communist Party to Wladyslaw Gomulka. Moscow's demands that the entire Polish coal production be sent to Soviet Russia began a bitter conflict between Ochab and Khrushchev. Ochab categorically refused Khrushchev's demand that Poland supply Soviet Russia with two million tons of coal in 1957.

In the period between 1949 and 1956, Gomulka noted, Polish coal production had fallen 36 per cent. Gomulka cited similar figures and a similar fall in production in all the other areas of Polish industry. In agriculture, forcing the peasants into collective farms had led to catastrophe. The peasants resisted so strongly that, despite the use of police terror and economic discrimination, 78.6 per cent of the land had remained in the hands of individual peasants. Of the remainder, 8.6 per cent had been taken over by the collective farms and 12.6 per cent by the state itself through its agency the State Agricultural Enterprises (P.G.R.). The private peasant farms, however, were able to produce 37 per cent more than the state and cooperative units.

It was imperative, Gomulka insisted, that a new economic program be instituted in Poland as soon as possible. First of all, the private enterprise of handicraftsmen, which the Communist regime

had destroyed, had to be revived. Producer cooperatives had to be allowed full scope for competition amongst themselves.

> "Building producer cooperatives," said Gomulka, "requires a creative, progressive approach on which no person or Party can have a monopoly. It is small-minded to think that only Communists can build Socialism, only people with a materialistic ideology."

Proceeding to an analysis of the Poznan disturbances, Gomulka emphasized that the workers had been teaching the leaders of the Party and government a painful lesson:

> "Taking up the strike weapon that Black Thursday in June 1956, the Poznan workers loudly cried out to us: 'We've had enough! Things can't go on this way!' "

Party leaders had been guilty of cynical and nasty evasions when they averred that the Poznan outbreak had been fostered by "imperialist agents and provocateurs," Gomulka declared. He went on:

> "Our brother workers' blood would not have been shed if the leaders of the Party—or rather, the mis-leaders of the Party—had come out and told them the whole truth. They should have admitted without hesitation that the workers were correct in their complaints. They should have spoken the truth, yesterday and today. You cannot escape the truth. If you hide it, it comes to haunt you like a ghost, terrifying you, scaring you, agitating you, making you miserable."

Gomulka also injected a personal note into his speech. He talked about the four years he had spent in prison, a victim of the most outrageous calumnies. But "reckoning up personal accounts was completely alien" to his nature. "These are matters of moment too great to be turned into the small change of petty, personal affairs." In conclusion, he warned that the specter of anti-Semitism was abroad in the land. He was quite explicit in pointing to the source of the poison:

> "The forces that are interested in spreading anti-Semitism are the same ones that wish to hold up the democratization of Poland" [i.e., the Stalinists].

All the accumulated popular bitterness against the Stalinist system with its rejection of human worth was unloaded during the

Eighth Plenum's proceedings, but it did not stay inside the Plenum. The rebellion was reflected in the official stenographic report. All those details that were omitted from the report were quickly filled in by word of mouth and spread throughout Poland.

Only three days after the conclusion of the Eighth Plenum, on October 25, 1956, the Hungarians revolted against their regime of terror and degradation. The Hungarian revolt actually began with a pro-Gomulka demonstration before the Budapest monument of Josef Bem, a Polish general who had fought for the Hungarians during the revolution of 1848. As in Warsaw the Budapest revolt was kindled by "eggheads"—poets, writers and intellectuals. Leading them was the philosopher and Marxist theoretician Georg Lukacs, one of the founders of the Hungarian Communist Party. By virtue of his denunciations of the Stalinist distortions of Marxism, Georg Lukacs rose to leadership of the intellectual revolt in Hungary. His ideas about personal freedom in the Communist society greatly influenced young Communist intellectuals in Yugoslavia, Poland and France. The Polish writers were the first who manifested their solidarity with the Hungarian rebels. The news of the Soviet intervention in Hungary moved leading Polish writers to publish this short but eloquent manifesto:

> "Deeply stirred by the tragedy of the Hungarian people, unable to keep silent in the face of the appeal of the Hungarian writers, we, writers and citizens of a country that appreciates the importance and knows the price of freedom, wish to express our grief at the bloodshed caused by discredited methods of government and the intervention of foreign armies."

The Hungarian events were prominently featured in the Polish press, which published eyewitness accounts and pictures that conveyed vividly the brutalities perpetrated by the Red Army in Budapest and other centers. Relief for Hungary was organized in Poland by writers and intellectuals. Throughout the country money, food and medicines were collected; many Poles donated medicines they had received from their relatives abroad. Since the Poles could not intervene directly to help the Hungarians, the blood they donated became a symbol of deeply felt solidarity. "The blood that has not

flown on the shores of the Vistula, when our people demolished the walls of lies, belongs to you," says one poet addressing the Hungarians, and another poet: "Nurse, I beg you, take the blood from my veins, the blood which I have not shed for Poland."

At the end of November 1956, when the last sparks of resistance to Soviet might were flickering in Hungary the Polish writers were holding their Twentieth Congress. One of the main themes of the debates was the question of Hungary. The writers sharply criticized the International Pen Club and UNESCO for their passivity in the face of the events in Hungary, and they attacked the new Polish leadership under Gomulka for its slowness in eradicating the last nests of Stalinism in Poland. The debates in which writers from all over the country took part covered all the aspects of life in present-day Poland—education, art, economics and politics. The resolutions demanded restoration of human dignity, rehabilitation of those innocently persecuted and payment of damages to them, abolition of all forms of censorship, free contact with Polish writers in exile and with all creative forces in the democratic world.

7

THE BATTLE AGAINST THE REVISIONISTS

SIX MONTHS after the October 1956 revolution, at the Ninth Plenum of the Central Committee held from May 15 to May 18, 1957, the same quarrel that had erupted within the Polish Communist Party at the Eighth Plenum was repeated on a smaller scale. Again the Stalinists concentrated their fire on the few Jews who still remained in the Party administration and government apparatus. In particular, they were out for the expulsion of Roman

Zambrowski from the Politburo and for an immediate trial of Jakub Berman and Hilary Minc, both ex-Vice Premiers and members of the Politburo. But Gomulka refused to allow this provocation; his only concession to the Stalinists was to expel Jakub Berman from the Party alongside with Stanislaw Radkiewicz, former Police Minister, and his aide Mieczyslaw Mietkowski. The resolution specified that the three were being purged for their part in the police crimes during the Stalin period. This was intended to prevent the purge from being interpreted as a "Jewish affair," which is what Moscow and the Natolin group had hoped for in order to start a new wave of anti-Semitism in Poland.

Any doubts that it was Soviet strategy to use anti-Semitism to fight consolidation of the achievements of October 1956 in Poland were dispelled shortly after the Ninth Plenum. An incident took place that had violent repercussions among Polish intellectuals though it was never reported in the press. Panteleimon Ponomarenko, the Soviet Ambassador to Poland, who had compromised himself in October by his intrigues with the Natolin group, had been recalled. The man who pulled the wires in the Warsaw Soviet Embassy now was Nikolai Maslenikov. He was the man who gave the leaders of the Natolin group—Zenon Nowak, Kazimierz Mijal and General Kazimierz Witaszewski—their instructions in the attempt to undermine the Gomulka regime at the Ninth Plenum.

One day Maslenikov called for a meeting with the officers of the Journalists' Union under the pretext of organizing an excursion of Polish journalists to the Soviet Union. Instead of talking about preparations for the tour, Maslenikov launched into a long tirade against the Gomulka government, particularly because of the workers' councils that it had encouraged and the far-reaching freedom that Gomulka had granted the Catholic Church. The high point, or low point, of his pronunciations was a violent attack on the Jews; Maslenikov insisted that the government apparatus, the press and the Party administration were all full of Jews. Maslenikov's tirade was interrupted by one of the journalists who shouted indignantly: "This is Nuremberg! This is Hitlerism!" However, Maslenikov, not at all fazed by the interruption, replied: "In a couple of years you'll be persuaded I was right. We have the same experiences behind us in the Soviet Union. We had a lot of Jews

in the republics of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kirgizia, and we expelled them."

The writers saw this statement as an obvious atempt to rank Poland with backward Asiatic Soviet republics. One of the writers commented that Karl Marx was a Jew, too. Maslenikov had a ready answer to that: "Marx was baptized, and his mother wasn't Jewish." To which the secretary of the Journalists' Union, Jerzy Mond, replied: "Do you know I'm a Jew?" This came as a great surprise to Maslenikov. "How can that be?" he exclaimed. "Your father was a general in the Polish army and the First Commander in Vilna."

It was impossible to stop him; Maslenikov resumed his critique of the Gomulka government. In an apparent bid to flatter the Polish intellectuals, Maslenikov noted that no workers were ever put into positions of responsibility in Soviet Russia as Gomulka had done in Poland. This was too much; the journalists simply left the room. Shortly thereafter, Maslenikov was recalled to Moscow. This was still another blow to the Natolin group.

As a realist and a Communist, Gomulka quickly perceived that he could only maintain himself in power with the help of a strong Party; so he addressed himself to the task of putting the Party on its feet again. The Party was already badly split, and Gomulka feared the possibility that the various factions would become set. First there were the revisionist youth groups; and then the former leaders of the Polish Socialist Party (P.P.S.), which had been assimilated in the Polish United Workers' Party in 1949 (Gomulka helping), were gaining in influence. The fear of entrenched factions was the leitmotif of Gomulka's speech with its call for a "unitary, strong Party." As Gomulka put it:

> "The most decisive factor is the Party, its force and compactness. . . . The Party is the most important instrument for solving all the complications of our life. Many people forget this—both inside and outside the Party."

Ironically, Gomulka mocked "the naive theoreticians" who maintained that Socialist democracy should make room for the virtues of the bourgeois democracies. "This," said Gomulka, was

like "saying that the interests of the exploited are the same as the interests of the exploiters." He bolstered his argument with references to England and the United States:

> "In England bourgeois democracy is very broad. This is because it does not threaten the ruling capitalistic system. But the same England that is so liberal at home suppresses all constitutional principles in its colonies. . . . In America, on the other hand, the Communists have no political rights at all. The Communist Party is persecuted, despite its weakness—or perhaps because of it."

But Gomulka was careful not to leave the impression that he intended to bring Stalinism and its "cult of the individual" back to Poland:

> "The unity of the Party cannot be a mechanical matter, blind, based on the principle that orders must be obeyed without reservations. Such a mechanical unity does not unite members of the Party, but on the contrary it is evidence of Party weakness. It is like the unity of a mound of sand in which the individual grains supposedly support one another. The Party's unity must be deliberate, it must spring out of desire, conviction, all its members striving toward one goal. . . . The Party's unity must be based on the principles of democratic centralism."

The right of free discussion and criticism is important, Gomulka stressed. However, he warned that "creative criticism" must be kept within the Party; Party members must never criticize the Party on the outside. And then came the threat:

> "A breach of this principle is a weakening of Party unity, contradicting democratic centralism. If a Party member disagrees with Party policy; if he does not submit to the Party majority on questions of principle; if his world view prevents him from accepting the Party's ideological principles, either he leaves the ranks, gives up his Party card, or the Party must expel him."

Underscoring the historic importance of the Soviet Communist Party's Twentieth Congress, at which Khrushchev revealed the crimes of the Stalin period, Gomulka stated:

> "These upheavals were necessary, even imperative. They destroyed those elements within the Communist Party that were weakening its force."

Gomulka then went on to confirm the connection between the Stalinist period, the bloody incidents in Poznan, and, eventually, the Polish October revolution. But he quickly retreated from this advanced position to warn that the October revolution also "revived the activities of reactionary forces that seized the opportunity for a broad offensive." What was more, Gomulka rebuked the Party for not properly defending "honest, active members" who had been openly attacked under the "ridiculous slogan of an attack on Stalinism."

At this point Gomulka took up the cudgels against the revisionist groups within the Polish Communist Party. He mentioned three revisionists by name: Leszek Kolakowski, the young philosopher, Roman Zymand, an editor of *Po Prostu* and Wiktor Woroszylski, former editor of the literary and political magazine *Nowa Kultura*. Woroszylski had described the bloody Soviet intervention in Hungary in all its naked violence.

Gomulka trained his entire political arsenal on Kolakowski's revisionist philosophy. He took the opportunity to perform a historical analysis of the various revisionist movements within Socialism and Communism. It was not, Gomulka admitted, that Marxism did not have to be revised from time to time, like any other scientific theory, since it too must "develop as life develops." But Lenin had already revised Marxism and the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party had carried that revisionism forward to the present day with its formulation of the thesis that "the working class can achieve power without bloodshed through parliamentary means." The theories advanced by the revisionist Kolakowski group, Gomulka warned, "crippled Marxist principles by introducing false theses that do not reflect social reality in Marxist teaching. . . . Revisionism represents the ideology of capitulation because of the difficulties of building Socialism." Gomulka added that "the Party cannot allow any factions to exist in its midst, regardless of their name; and it is political nonsense to divide the Party into left, center and right."

It is typical of Gomulka that in all his polemic against Kolakowski's conception of "integral democracy" and the "free scope for political forces," he never rejected Kolakowski's theories in principle. Rather, Gomulka warned of the dangerous consequences

of putting these theories into practice in Poland's special circumstances. Picking up Kolakowski's admission that permitting the reinstatement of non-Communist parties in Poland involves some "risk," Gomulka reprimanded Kolakowski:

> "You can risk a couple of zlotys on the lottery, but no responsible Pole will risk the fate of Poland, the fate of his people, on a lottery like 'integral democracy.' "

Though he concentrated his attack on the revisionists, Gomulka did not spare the Stalinists of the Natolin group either. He called them "dogmatists and conservatives" who "alienate the Party from the masses." In his words:

> "The Party dogmatists wish to twist life to conform to their way of thinking so as not to abandon a single iota of what they consider to be the untouchable holiness of Marxism and Leninism. But life does not permit itself to be twisted to conform to unrealistic principles. . . . The dogmatists cannot force the masses, who think completely differently, to accept their ideas. . . . The dogmatist always has the right Marxist formulas at his finger tips—like the dictatorship of the proletariat, the leadership of the Party, the united front of workers and peasants. But the fact is these principles are only empty phrases to them."

Gomulka criticized those Communist theoreticians who asserted that all Communist parties all over the world had to be unanimous on all points, even the most minor. He said:

> "We maintain that such a thing is impossible, that to ignore the national characteristics and specific conditions for building Socialism in each country is to be guilty of a terribly nihilistic dogmatism that has to be removed—for it prevents Socialist reconstruction and incites the working masses against Socialism."

Characteristic of the "Polish way to Socialism," Gomulka pointed out at the Ninth Plenum, was the spontaneous appearance of workers' councils in Polish factories. However, he limited the role of these councils; they "must not be transformed into political or administrative organs of the Party or state, but must represent a new instrument through which the workers shall participate directly in the national economy."

Gomulka took a daring and novel stand on the Party's relation to strikes. He asserted, "The Party is against strikes." At the same

time Gomulka conceded that "the Party will not use its executive powers in the event of a work stoppage." He appealed to the workers to practice self-restraint in employing the strike weapon. He was thinking of the situation in Poznan where for a long time the workers' justified demands in the Cegielski factory were ignored by the Party bureaucrats—the eventual result was an open strike followed by bloodshed. Gomulka added:

> "In the event the workers do stop work, the Party must go straight to the scene and thoroughly investigate the reasons for this situation. For under a Socialist state, a strike is an important indication that something has gone wrong, that the executive machinery is ailing or that disruptive, hostile elements have broken in."

Barely a year later, in April 1958, Gomulka summarized the workers' council experiment. Formed in October 1956 and modeled after the Yugoslavian workers' councils, those in Poland were not granted the same broad administrative authority, for the simple reason that the Polish workers did not have the competence of the Yugoslav workers. At the April congress of Polish trade unions Gomulka described the reorganization of the workers' councils as part of the general effort to strengthen Party authority. There were, in the country at the time, 5,600 workers' councils whose activities often produced confusion in industry because of their failure to coordinate with the Party and the unions. The reorganization plan called for new, autonomous administrative bodies in the factories consisting of broadened councils, representing the Party and the unions as well as the industrial workers.

Gomulka used the occasion of this speech to upbraid the workers for frivolously resorting to the strike weapon. In his opinion, strikes had a place "only under a capitalistic economy." Under Socialism, workers had other means to defend their interests; a strike in a Socialist society "is a sign of anarchy or an anti-class demonstration." Still, Gomulka did not retreat from his original assertion: the workers did have the right to call attention to their demands through a brief work stoppage if all other means of obtaining satisfaction proved fruitless.

The most delicate part of Wladyslaw Gomulka's program speech at the Plenum had to deal with relations with Soviet Rus-

sia. He brilliantly chose his phrases so as to pass unscathed between the Scylla of Moscow on the one hand and the Charybdis of Polish public opinion, on the other. To satisfy Moscow, Gomulka asserted that Socialism was opposed to any form of "nationalistic chauvinism" and was "international in character." At the same time Gomulka stressed that "the national path to Socialism means the distinction between the Soviet path to Socialism and that of any other land." Then, going a step further:

> "Even if Soviet Russia had avoided the plague of the personal cult, the Soviet path to Socialism would not be proper for all countries. . . . Every people has its own specific characteristic development, its own special national traits. Hence, every attempt to imitate the Russian path to Socialism must be rejected."

Passing to relations between Church and State, Gomulka pointed out:

> "Our Party works on the assumption that the world view of idealism will continue to exist for a long time, side by side with our own materialistic world view. We do not prevent the church from going its own way on religious questions, but we demand that the church recognize that Socialism is being built in Poland. Further cooperation between the church and the present Polish state depends on that recognition."

Gomulka's far-reaching concessions to the Catholic Church were sharply criticized—not in Moscow and the other countries of the Communist bloc alone but in the Polish Communist Party itself. Even Gomulka's closest associates expressed doubt about the correctness of concluding an agreement with Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski. Permission for religious instruction in the state schools meant indirectly granting the Catholic Church important political status in the country. Those opposed to this agreement, remarkable as the only one of its kind in the Communist world, argued that it could only encourage the extreme forces within the church to make further demands, that the eventual result could only be further conflict.

Nor, on the other hand, were church circles completely satisfied with Cardinal Wyszynski's signature to the church's recognition that "Socialism is being built in Poland." The extreme forces

within the Polish Catholic Church reproached the Cardinal on the ground that he had given his consent to the nationalization of church property and had ceded the church's claim to its possessions which were distributed among the peasants.

The truth was, however, that neither the head of the Catholic Church nor the First Secretary of the Polish Communist Party labored under any illusions as to the permanency of the peace between Catholicism and Communism in Poland. They were acting as realistic statesmen and true Polish patriots; the agreement was a temporary armistice without which the national catastrophe of Soviet intervention would have been unavoidable.

Part Two

A City in Turmoil

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8

WARSAW, THE MARTYRED CAPITAL

EVERYTHING ABOUT WARSAW, rebuilt since the war, reflects the mood of the Polish population, suspended between two worlds—the East and the West. You can see it in the city's architecture, in the sharp contrast between the new buildings bearing the definite imprint of Soviet barrack style, on the one hand, and the small, intimate, restored Renaissance houses, on the other. Here we have a clear statement of the paradox of Poland under a Communist regime.

It was raining and windy when I arrived in Warsaw, but I opened the window of the old taxi on the way to Hotel Bristol. I was curious to see what every street, every lane in the Polish capital looked like now; twelve years before, the city had been a ghastly graveyard.

Now, in the early morning light, the outlines of monotonous rows of new apartment house developments came into view, standing alongside fine specimens of recently restored pre-war houses with their wide windows and grilled balconies. The street lights were still burning; in the twilight, they cast a pale glow on the muddy, pitted streets. The sidewalks were already crowded with people hurrying to work in the suburbs where the factories are located. There were long queues standing in front of the streetcar and bus stations; every time a streetcar or bus arrived, it was a signal for pushing to begin. Those who could not get inside squeezed onto the outside steps; there they clustered, in the popular phrase, like "grapes."

The taxi driver was reserved at first. Apparently, he did not know what to make of this odd combination—an American speaking Polish. After a while I gained his confidence, and he began to talk freely. A typical citizen of Warsaw, he was full of sayings and wisecracks at the expense of the Communist regime. (He quoted the popular pun "*Gomulka i spolka*"—"Gomulka & Company.")

Within a few minutes, the driver had succeeded in giving me a full picture of the bitter struggle in which millions of Polish workers are engaged just to keep their heads above water. They must work two weeks to earn enough money for a pair of shoes, two months for a cheap suit. Yet, at the same time as he described the difficulties of life in present-day Poland, the Warsaw taxi driver talked with pride of the rebuilding of his city. Like other inhabitants of the city, he, his wife and his children had all contributed a day's work to the common task—they had picked up bricks from the ruins and hauled them away. As he drove over the icy streets in his rattling cab, the taxi driver told me a joke I was afterward to hear many times. "You must have noticed our national emblem at the railroad station—the Polish eagle. They've taken the crown off the bird's head, clipped his wings and even chopped off a piece of his tail. But one thing they haven't been able to do—turn his head to the left!"

I heard the *vox populi* speaking heresy again in the Bristol Hotel barber shop. The Bristol is where all the international tourists who visit the Polish capital stay. The barber motioned me to a seat between two lathered men who were deep in lively conversation. The man on my left was a priest; he had come for his shave at the Bristol cooperative barber shop after holding morning services in the Church of Saint Anna across the way. The man on my right was an official in the Ministry of Culture, whose offices were in the restored palace of the Potocki family opposite the church.

I gathered that the Ministry official had also been at services. He was a middle-aged man and far more outspoken in his criticism of the regime than the priest was. Their talk was mostly about the latest rise in wages that had been granted to workers and officials; they felt that wages were still unrealistically low in comparison with the prices of manufactured products. But both of them spoke with great admiration of Wladyslaw Gomulka, who has to cope

with the grave dilemma of keeping a balance between the agitated people of Poland and the threatening Soviet neighbor. As they left, the priest, in a few carefully chosen words, summarized the tense mood of the times. "You understand," he said to me, "we are a nation sitting still, our ears pricked, listening with beating heart to what's going on next door in our neighbor's country, always afraid they will begin thundering again."

The Bristol is an old-fashioned hotel in the process of renovation and still surrounded by scaffolding. In its brightly lit halls I immediately sensed the change in Poland's relations with the outside world since the winter of 1956 when I last had visited the country. For two months of that pre-October Revolution year I had been the only private tourist from the Western world staying at the Bristol. As the hotel manager put it, I was a kind of "wild" guest. All the other people staying in the hotel at the time belonged to one organized group or another. There were delegations from countries all over the Communist bloc—from East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, Soviet Russia and the Asiatic countries, headed by Communist China. The delegates always appeared for meals together; the hotel's big dining halls held long tables, each with a miniature flag representing the nation whose delegates sat there. The language of communication between the Asiatic delegates and Polish representatives was Russian. I discovered to my astonishment that the Chinese and Korean comrades were far more fluent in the language of Moscow than were their Polish counterparts.

In the winter of 1958, in addition to the usual delegates from Communist countries, I found the Bristol housing a number of tourists from the Western world. There were representatives of English machinery plants, shipping experts from Holland, merchants from the Scandinavian lands, representatives of American publishers come to sell technical books for translation into Polish and to collect royalties for American bestsellers that had been published in Polish and agents after payment for Broadway plays that had been performed on the best stages in Poland. The Bristol also showed signs of the new Communist infiltration of the Middle East. I came across engineers from Syria and Egypt who had come to purchase Polish railroad cars and locomotives. A professor of

Arabic at Warsaw University, with whom I became friendly in the Bristol lobby, admitted quite openly that, besides the Egyptian Transport Ministry experts, there were military specialists buying patrol boats for the Egyptian fleet.

The slipshod management of the Bristol gave me a notion of the disorganization rampant in the Polish capital—incidentally, under constant and vigorous attack in the press. The papers are always full of complaints about water shortages (the pressure was so low you never got any water on the top floors) to say nothing of central heating which usually stops working on extremely cold days. You can spend a whole day at the municipal offices trying to have a plumbing fixture repaired or a gas or electrical fixture installed. But you will not get the job done unless you know a plumber or electrician who will do it for you on his own time—you have to pay him extra. Besides, you have to worry about buying the necessary parts for the repair on the free market or from the repair man himself who will filch it from the government storehouse. There is just nobody in charge to whom you can complain. Even in the Bristol, which has priority as a hostel for foreign representatives, I had no water, hot or cold, for three days in succession. The old-fashioned, cumbersome elevator, dating back to Ignacy Paderewski's days (the Bristol used to belong to the famous musician-statesman), stopped running several times a day. According to the official statistics I read in a Warsaw newspaper, there are 900 elevators in Warsaw, but more than 200 of them are always under repair.

Warsaw gives the impression of being a city without a municipal administration to see to it that the streets are cleaned, the trees pruned, the sidewalks repaired, the street lights protected. The real administrator of a nationalized apartment house is the watchman; since he is poorly paid, he has no sense of responsibility for the property. Let me cite an illustration of the way the capital of Poland is mismanaged. In the summer of 1958, a den of poisonous snakes was discovered in the heart of the city. In vain the people of Warsaw appealed to, in turn, the sanitation department, the fire department and the police. Each municipal agency replied that its duties did not include removing poisonous snakes. For several days in a row the evening paper *Express Wieczorny* ran a column

with the heading, "On the Poisonous Snake Battlefront." The magazine *Przeglad Kulturalny* had this to say:

> "Each of our municipal institutions is far too well acquainted with the exact limits of its duties ever to be guilty of taking the initiative in any matter. . . . In our city the best thing is to be a poisonous snake. . . . Complete freedom guaranteed."

Warsaw has the appearance of a city in the middle of construction. There still are not enough sidewalks, the courtyards have not yet been cleared of rubble and many buildings, already fully occupied, still have their scaffolding standing. Besides the streets and squares where reconstruction has just begun, there are still untouched ruins standing between reconstructed houses like rotten teeth. The rebuilding of these ruins Warsaw jokesters call "filling cavities."

The city is almost 80 per cent rebuilt, but there is an unusually great shortage of apartments. More than 70,000 persons out of a population of 1,090,000 are still living in wooden huts and the cellars of unexcavated ruined buildings without water or electricity. These human warrens are to be found in the very center of the city, often next door to splendid mansions put up by the ministries and bureaus of the swollen state apparatus. When construction began in the devastated Polish capital, every new building was an important event in the revival of its street. Now nobody comments on the positive achievements of reconstruction. On the contrary, the residents of Warsaw, particularly the veterans who retain a memory of the old-time charm, voice disappointment at the insipidity and shabbiness of the new areas.

In the spring of 1958 a group of prominent Polish writers, art historians and architects met in Warsaw to discuss the favorable and unfavorable aspects in the rebuilding of the capital. Two of the participants in the symposium were General Marian Spychalski, the Minister of Defense, who had participated in the original planning for Warsaw's reconstruction in his professional capacity of architect, and the former chief architect of Warsaw, Jozef Sigalin, who had been the target of public attack during the October revolution. Sigalin was accused of having succumbed to the influence of Soviet architecture. The symposium served as a forum for

two opposing points of view. The writers and art historians were disappointed because the charming intimacy of the city as they remembered it from their youth had been destroyed; they missed the old antique and book shops and the coffee houses that had been so much a part of Warsaw's tradition. The architects replied that the traditionalists were failing to take into consideration the fact that Warsaw had been rebuilt under a regime that had shaken Poland to its foundations. Besides, the majority of the million inhabitants of present-day Warsaw had very little in common with the city as it was before the war. More than 35 per cent of the capital's current population had been born during the war years and had no associations at all with the streets that had been damaged in 1939. Something like half of the inhabitants were not native-born citizens of the city. Only a small percentage were nostalgic for the good old days. However, the architects did concede that what had been decisive in the rebuilding of Warsaw had not been utilitarian or esthetic considerations but the ukases of the bureaucratic machinery. The bureaucrats had thought solely in quantitative, never in qualitative, terms. The regime bent every effort to centralize industry and commerce. This showed itself architecturally in a concentration on large buildings; a concentration which, it was commonly felt, had been the chief error.

Exhaustion marks the faces of most people you encounter in the streets of Warsaw. It comes from the fatigue of the daily struggle to meet their budget by supplementing their meager wages or salary from their regular job with overtime or Sunday work—and Sunday is the only day off in Communist Poland. The weariness, which seems to seep into the very marrow of their bones, turns into apathy; there is no hope for improvement. Housewives and domestics who work for government officials, writers and artists are constantly grumbling over long hours spent every day in the queues. People line up in front of cooperative food stores for scarce food items to relieve the monotony of their diet. There is no shortage of bread, potatoes, fish or even meat. But, people complain, you are always too late for the delicacies: eggs, mushrooms, butter, preserves and, particularly, citrus fruits. At every queue you hear the same complaints: the best items are taken by now. They have been grabbed up by private restaurant owners who have

bribed the store manager, or else the salesmen have put aside the desirable items to sell for their personal profit outside the shop.

One thing, however, has changed since the October revolution. The mysterious shops with yellow-curtained windows where Party bureaucrats and government "big wheels" were able to buy luxury foods and other imported articles have disappeared.

Of the 3,538 business establishments existing in Warsaw in 1959, more than half had sprung up after the October revolution, due to the Gomulka regime's relaxation of restrictions on private trade. However, private trade is still at a disadvantage. The monotonous, drab cooperative stores are situated in the main streets where they occupy large quarters while most private businesses hole up in miserable quarters in the side streets of Warsaw, some even in building corridors, wooden huts and bombed houses.

A class by themselves are the P.K.O. exchange guilds in Warsaw. Usually, stores, restaurants and coffee houses are empty on a workday, but the P.K.O. stores are always hectic. Here is where Polish citizens who receive gift dollars from abroad exchange them for goods which they may resell on the spot for cash at the rate of 100 zlotys to a dollar rather than the official rate of 24 zlotys. The P.K.O. stores represent a big source of dollars for the government Through them tens of millions of dollar credits flow into the Polish treasury every year. Besides, the gift goods that enter the country via the P.K.O. are an important economic aid to tens of thousands of Polish citizens. The consumers one meets in the P.K.O. stores are mostly elderly members of the former aristocratic and middle classes, whose clothes bear the mark of shabby gentility and ancient elegance. One also encounters a large number of peasant women wearing shawls and mannish boots. Well-to-do, they are after luxury items that cannot be bought in other shops at any price.

Items you can buy in the P.K.O. stores include such things as nylons from America, cognac from France, woolens from England, hats from Italy, Swiss watches and even oranges from Israel. These come into Poland as part of trade agreements with foreign countries. The P.K.O. counters are subject to large fluctuations in various items. Sometimes, an item can be unavailable for months; at other times, there will be a flood of one particular item, such as

Norwegian sardines or Swedish fountain pens. Then the prices of these articles fall, and the holders of dollar gifts wait for a fresh transport of some item that is in demand to arrive before redeeming their dollars. The most valued items are French cognac, American fruit juices and Swiss watches. When I was in Poland, the item most in demand at the P.K.O. stores was the women's silver-gray, simulated fur coats known as Ollegro.

Dollar credits are the only medium of exchange in the P.K.O. stores, but people who receive the gift dollars from abroad and cannot afford to enjoy the luxuries because they need the money to live on can always find customers for P.K.O. goods among the wives of high government officials, Party functionaries or rich peasants.

II

I was seized with a feeling of profound unhappiness at the first sight of the former ghetto area. Where only a few years ago stood piles of ashes and underground bunkers now rise huge, gray apartment house blocks. The heavy traffic on the modern highway, the hectic building activity and the lively movement in the brand new streets and squares which have sprung up on the ruins of the ghetto depressed my spirits further. I felt lost, like a stranger in a neighborhood where I had spent the happiest years of my youth.

There are few pedestrians out in the streets during weekday working hours; everybody is in the factory or office. The stores and shops that gave these streets such color and life in the old days are gone. Here and there one comes across a cooperative, a government shop, restaurant or drugstore for neighborhood clientele.

The reconstruction of the ghetto quarter began in 1951 during the period when the massive Soviet architectural style was influencing the planning of new streets in Warsaw. The Stalin cult lay like a heavy cloud over Poland, and Polish poets wrote panegyrics to the Soviet dictator. The fashion has long since changed, but the new buildings put up in the former ghetto area continue to follow Soviet models. The only exception is the Mostowski palace which once housed the military staff and now serves as headquarters for the Citizens Militia. Behind the palace, at the intersection of three

ghetto streets that were wiped out—Zamenhofa, Gesia, and Franciszkanska—stands the ghetto memorial. The area all around it is desolate, filled with piles of ashes and crumbling bricks and overgrown with weeds. This was the center of the Jewish ghetto where the first open battle against the armored Nazi battalions took place.

I stared a long time at the nearly completed apartment houses that served as background for the ghetto memorial. They were awaiting their first inhabitants, but no sign of life was perceptible. A red streetcar bearing a large number 9 sped in back of the buildings on Muranowska Plaza, flying down the broad roadway of what used to be Nalewki Street toward Bielanska. The familiar number on the streetcar, taking the same route as in the old days, brought back a picture of a vanished Warsaw, colorful and vital. Suddenly I could see the intricate network of streets and alleys; the crowded stores and penny shops; the rich men's mansions and basement flats; the chained courtyards with their Chasidic study rooms, synagogues, and yeshivoth; the stalls and wagons of harried, hurrying Jewish street peddlers. I felt sick at heart as I walked toward Dzielna and Pawia Streets. Here the martyred Janusz Korczak had led the children from his orphanage to the Umschlagplatz and death.

The foundations of new houses had already been poured on Dzielna, but Pawia was still empty. The only thing left of the infamous Pawiak, or Pawia Street jail, is a section of wall with a coil of barbed wire hanging down it. The rest of the thick walls of the Pawiak have crumbled to dust. In the middle of the former jail courtyard stands a surviving chestnut tree; it bears a legend stating that the Nazis had carried out their executions here.

Plodding through the mud where Prosta and Stawki Streets and Parysowski Place used to be, I came to the open place where the ghetto memorial towers in the air. The dying sun's reflection, falling on the high granite block, pierced the gray wintry clouds like a burning wound. As I approached the ghetto square, paved with gray and black stones, an automobile drove up. Two well-dressed men got out carrying a large floral wreath. They walked up the memorial steps and laid the wreath at its foot. Then, removing their hats, they sank to their knees. For a long time they studied

the bronze figures of the ghetto heroes. When they returned to their auto, I struck up a conversation with the visitors and discovered that they were the commercial representative of the Bonn government in Warsaw and his attaché. At first I was mystified at what had moved the Bonn diplomat to visit the ghetto monument on a nasty winter day, but the reason immediately became clear to me when, next to the fresh wreath of the West German representatives, I saw another, slightly faded wreath. It bore the legend: "From the delegation of the national front of Democratic Germany in honor of the victims of Fascism."

The ghetto monument represents a flaming underground bunker where a small group of ghetto fighters are keeping the promise they made in the underground fighters' organization's last appeal to the outside world:

> "Be it known to you that every threshold in the ghetto will remain to the end what it is now—a fortress. We may all perish in this fight, but we will not surrender. . . . We are fighting for your freedom and ours, for your human and national pride—and ours. . . . We will take revenge for the crimes committed in Oswiecim, Treblinka, Belzec and Majdanek. . . ."

The sculptor incorporated these words in the monumental figures of the central group which shows the fighters, their clothing on fire, looking death fearlessly in the eyes as they face the powerful enemy with stones, sticks and bare hands. The young sculptor, Nathan Rappoport, captured in the figures and their facial expressions the martyrdom of generations. He envisaged the ghetto fighters as perpetuating the two-thousand-year-old tradition of Jewish martyrdom in the form of a huge candelabrum, or menorah, set on each side of the memorial. This is a twofold symbol: of traditional Judaism and the rebirth of the State of Israel, whose emblem is a menorah. The heroic ghetto fighters have their wrathful faces turned to the still uncleared ruins of the Gesia Street jail where thousands of Jews were tortured and where the Nazis performed experiments in asphyxiation that were later to be adapted on a large scale to gas chambers. The ghetto monument was erected on April 19, 1948, on the fifth anniversary of the Ghetto

Uprising and just a few weeks before the proclamation of the State of Israel.

Walking on, one can still find traces of underground bunkers. Twisted iron rods protrude from mounds of crumbled stone, the skeletons of buildings that the Nazis dynamited and where the last ghetto fighters were buried alive. Every once in a while one comes across signs of former domestic life in these holes in the ground. Originally occupied by the poor Jews of Warsaw, later, during the uprising, they were transformed into bastions of bitter resistance. I could still find occasional brass candlesticks, twisted and half-melted by the fire, rusty spoons, shards of dishes and iron pots that had survived the ghetto fire.

The stillness was broken by the mournful, drawn-out whistle of a locomotive, followed by the rhythmic click-click of wheels. A long train passed by, pulling freight behind a stream of thick smoke. On these same rails, from this very place, the ghastly trains left with cargo of tens of thousands of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto. Crowded into sealed cattle cars, the Jews were deported to the extermination camps in Treblinka, Oswiecim and Majdanek. The wooden barracks of the Umschlagplatz where the Nazis carried out their "selections" still stand, fenced around by barbed wire. Here the Nazis separated the sick from the healthy, deciding on the spot who was to go straight to death in the gas chambers and who to slave camps for a slower end.

I stood, frozen, staring at these wooden buildings with their broken windows and gaping doors, the death station of the Warsaw Ghetto, where every board, every stick is penetrated with the screams of mothers whose children were snatched from their arms, their heads bashed on the spot. Large sections of the ghetto ruins that have been cleared are covered with building material. In digging the foundations of the new apartment houses, the workmen frequently come across mass graves. The heaps of human bones were buried without fuss, unceremoniously, with no prayer for the dead.

Near the ghetto memorial, at the end of Gesia Street, lies the Jewish graveyard, which, amazingly, survived the catastrophe. It is a mystery to this very day how the Nazis missed the opportunity to desecrate the Jewish graveyard in Warsaw whose tombstones

recount the fame and splendor of Polish Jewry. Dozens of mausoleums and tombstones, such as the sepulcher of the author Isaac Leib Peretz with the splendid bas-reliefs by Abraham Ostrzega, were left undisturbed. Still to be seen are the last resting places of Abraham Stern, the mathematical genius, Josef Wolff, grandfather of the virtuoso-composer, Josef Wieniawski and many other notables. Particularly outstanding is the marble tombstone above the grave of Berek Szmulowicz-Sonenberg. This many-colored bas-relief shows the courtyard of the Jewish magnate in the Praga suburb with his grain ships anchored on the shores of the Vistula River. The son of Samuel Zbitkower-Sonenberg founded the Bergson family of which the great French philosopher Henri Bergson was a member. The colorful monument is surrounded by simple stones marking the collective graves of the resistance heroes whose bones were dug out of the ghetto bunkers and places of execution. The tread of heavy Polish tractors rumbled through the stillness of the graveyard. They were clearing away the last vestiges of the ghetto ruins, preparing ground for the erection of new living quarters. Before long, the ghetto monuments will be surrounded by a new district, a new life and new people, who will have a bare inkling of the fact that the greatest tragedy of modern Jewry took place on this spot.

In a polished museum cabinet behind glass, on the first floor of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, stand two rusty milk cans. Above them hangs the portrait of Dr. Emanuel Ringelblum, the "archivist" of the Warsaw ghetto. His eyes are full of touching innocence, but Ringelblum's lips are drawn in a grimace of endless bitterness. I stood before the cabinet, spellbound, reading the brief legend which tells how Ringelblum hid the most important documents testifying to the martyrdom of Polish Jewry in these milk cans—documents written by the historian himself or under his supervision by ordinary people who had witnessed the tragic events. The milk cans containing this material were buried in the Warsaw Ghetto. They were dug up in 1946 from under the foundations of a building on Nowolipie Street where Ringelblum and his closest associates had lived. The unearthed diaries, reports and documents are kept in a special room behind an armored door; the

walls have been reinforced with concrete and iron. The room is known as "the bunker."

Also behind glass in the Jewish Historical Institute are an old-fashioned hunting rifle and two pistols that, literally, go back to Napoleonic times. These are the only vestiges of the Ghetto Uprising's "arsenal." With weapons such as these the fighters in the Warsaw Ghetto faced Nazi tanks and machine guns.

Actually, the milk cans and the ancient firing pieces are the most valuable displays in this museum commemorating slaughtered Polish Jewry. The gold and silver, the pearls and diamonds that the rich Jewish families amassed, the silver candelabra and gold beakers—all these the Nazis plundered. But the manuscripts and arms have outlived the Nazis, and they live on to tell the story of Jewish death and resistance.

Other rooms in the Jewish Historical Institute contain the records of the Jewish Councils in the former ghettos of the large Jewish cities in Poland. The most prominent is the archive of the Lodz Ghetto, the so-called "Rumkowski Kingdom." Chaim Rumkowski, the despotic chairman of the Jewish Council in Lodz, maintained law and order and kept an exact file of the Jews under his "reign." His archive contains index cards for 150,000 Jews in the Lodz Ghetto, many with photographs attached. The Historical Institute's photographic laboratory is kept busy making prints of these photographs and sending them off to relatives in different parts of the world who inquire after dead or missing relatives.

Next in importance is the Cracow Ghetto archive which also contains the rare historical documents of Jewish community life in the former royal city; these documents go back to the sixteenth century. The archive of the old Jewish community in Wroclaw, formerly the German city of Breslau, contains rich and precious material. The Wroclaw collection includes the remains of the Rabbinical Seminary Library that Professor Heinrich Graetz, the noted Jewish historian, directed during the second half of the nineteenth century. The Lublin Ghetto's archive is the repository of documents from the Council of the Four Lands in the seventeenth century, as well as the rich library of Yeshivath Chochmey Lublin. The Jewish Historical Institute also preserves the archival remains of numerous Jewish communities in Poland as well as other Euro-

pean and North African countries. Some of the material goes back to the ninth century.

One such early manuscript is a letter written on parchment by Jewish community leaders in North Africa dealing with the famous ninth-century traveler Eldad Hadani. The Hebrew script is unusually elongated, showing the influence of early Gothic script; but the writing is clear and legible. In a few lines the community leaders state that Eldad Hadani had visited their country and that he came from a Jewish community situated in the area between India and China.

Other rare documents in the Historical Institute collection include a manuscript by Jacob Antoli who lived in France and Italy during the twelfth century. Known by Jews as "the teacher," Antoli popularized the teachings of Maimonides. There are also official papers dealing with the Sabbatai Zvi period, revealing unfamiliar facts about the messianic movement which agitated Jewish life during the seventeenth century and produced bitter internal controversy in the Polish Jewish communities.

Viewing the letters patent granted to Joseph Suess-Oppenheimer known also as Jud Suess, I had a strong feeling that I was seeing an uncensored close-up of contemporary history. The letters patent consisted of a large illuminated parchment bearing the red wax seal of Kaiser Wilhelm the First, dated 1732. It granted Jud Suess the title of "the Kaiser's Court Factor" and made him the financial power in the principality of Wuertemberg. Six years later, in 1738, Jud Suess was slandered and taken to the gallows exactly as Rudolf Slansky was to be in Communist Prague more than two hundred years later. Like Slansky, Jud Suess was accused of being responsible for a "catastrophic economic crisis" as part of a Jewish conspiracy. And Slansky, like Jud Suess, confessed to all the charges heaped on his shoulders. There was one important difference in the stories of the two men. In this age of radio and television, not a single sound, not a syllable of Slansky's last words escaped from the Prague jail where he was hanged; whereas the pages of history contain the angry words that Jud Suess flung to the world as the noose was cast around his neck. He screamed: "Hear, O Israel! I am a victim of terror and crime!"

III

The Warsaw skyline is dominated by the Palace of Culture which the Soviet government built as a "gift to the Polish people." This architectural giant, mixing Byzantine, Baroque and American functional styles in a kind of Socialist realism cocktail, is a symbol of Moscow's stranglehold on the capital of Poland.

The Palace of Culture is situated in an area where more than 100,000 persons lived before the war but which was devastated during the Warsaw uprising. One enters the Palace through a square where water fountains play upon sculptured groups of muscular men holding hammers in their hands, robust women and huge Red Army soldiers. The wings of the Palace hold theaters, movie houses, concert halls and a swimming pool. A skyscraper, which towers over the center of the building, contains forty-five floors of office space for social institutions, scientific bodies and publishing houses. On its steel peak, pointing 777 feet to the sky like a sharp needle, is Poland's first television station.

The Palace of Culture is one of the sights of Warsaw; but the tourists from all over the country, the working men and students, who visit the Palace stare with astonishment at the south wall of the chief gallery with its legend, "Josef Stalin's Palace of Culture." With its complex of buildings to meet the cultural needs of the city, the Palace fills a great gap in the Polish capital, but the skeptical people of Warsaw feel an undisguised aversion for it. They have a number of jokes about it. A favorite one is that Soviet Russia built the Palace of Culture to punish the Poles because in 1918 the government of independent Poland destroyed the Greek Orthodox church, situated on the former Pilsudski Place.

Built at the same time as the Palace of Culture, along the same architectural lines, is the Soviet Embassy, which the inhabitants of Warsaw call "the Small Kremlin" after the high, massive walls that ring the huge building like a fortress. The Soviet Embassy is located on the street leading to the Belvedere Palace which was formerly inhabited by Polish royalty and most recently the residence of the late Communist leader Boleslaw Bierut. The Palace of Culture and the Soviet Embassy are architectural twins symbolizing Moscow's might and taste.

The Old City of Warsaw has many contrasting sights: narrow, charming streets with arched passageways and shops whose show windows are decorated with themes from Polish regional and folk art. The narrow two-windowed small houses of the Old City which were built by Polish aristocrats in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have retained their ornamental Renaissance façades, but inside they are furnished with all modern conveniences. The new aristocracy of the Communist regime lives there—writers, artists, university people and Party dignitaries.

The best guides to the reconstruction of the Old City have been the illustrations of the Italian painter Canaletto, artist to the court of the last Polish king, Stanislaw August. Canaletto left behind him a treasure of illustrations of the Polish way of life during the eighteenth century. The small streets in the old market place still bear the names of old kings of Poland, families of aristocracy and church notables.

The Old City is now the center of Warsaw night life, such as it is. There is no comparing it in color or scope with night life in pre-war Warsaw when the Polish capital hummed with vitality. Nowadays, Warsaw, with barely 2,000 street lights, is the most poorly lit capital in Europe. The Palace of Culture, which itself consumes as much light as a city of 150,000 inhabitants, seems to be completely outside of the Warsaw way of life. Many of the Warsaw streets, particularly in the outskirts of the city, have no street lamps at all.

The people of Warsaw work hard and go to sleep early. After ten o'clock the streets are deserted. Here and there one comes across people getting out of theaters—there are many more theaters now than before the war, and they are on a higher level. The old night spots are gone from Warsaw; the only places open after midnight are occasional bars or dance halls, usually in hotels. The most fashionable restaurants and dance halls are in the Old City's arched cellars. Most popular is the historic Fukier wine cellar which has remained, as it was before the war, the meeting place for foreign diplomats and Bohemians. Henryk Fukier who used to own the wine cellar is now a wine expert for the Polish Ministry of Commerce; he takes frequent trips abroad on special missions to buy wine for the government restaurants. Fukier comes

around to his old place from time to time, particularly when entertaining foreign visitors who wish to be shown the famous wine cellar where the old wooden casks are kept. Henryk Fukier is the last offshoot in a line of Polish wine merchants going back to the fifteenth century. The Fukier family cellar has long been famous in Europe for its old wines. It used to be said that these wines "were born in Hungary and bred in Poland," because the wine barrels used to be hauled to Poland from Hungary by oxen spanned to wagons. In 1939, at the outbreak of the war, there were old Hungarian wines in the Fukier cellars dating back to the year 1606. The Nazis pillaged the cellar and the historic building itself was wrecked during the Warsaw uprising. Units of the Armja Krajowa (Home Army) resistance movement that had barricaded themselves in the arched buildings and cellars of the Old City were buried in the ruins.

More than 90 per cent of the buildings in the Old City were wiped off the face of the earth. Polish architectural historians, artists and skilled master masons were mobilized immediately after Poland's liberation in 1945 to plan the rebuilding of the capital. They were careful to reproduce the historic buildings in detail, both as to inside furnishings and outside ornament. They were particularly zealous in planning the restoration of the Old City which had been left a pile of stones and ashes. The first part of Warsaw to be rebuilt was the historic quarter; the architects were anxious to recapture the spirit of Old Warsaw.

Near the Old City the large column showing King Zygmunt holding a giant cross was put back up again, as were a number of churches, the most important being the Gothic cathedral of Saint John. In fact, the churches were the first buildings to rise from the ashes of the devastated capital. The honor of being the very first building to go up under the Communist regime went to the Church of Saint Anna in the fashionable Krakowskie Przedmiescie where Cardinal Wyszynski often preaches. The workmen began by raising the statue of Christ which lay face down; then they attacked the fragments of ornaments and bas-reliefs not completely destroyed by fire.

It was not until the winter of 1958 that the people of Warsaw began to rebuild the main part of town—Theater Place with the

four streets (Miodowa, Dluga, Senatorska, and Bielanska) that were the capital's nerve center in pre-war Warsaw. A national monument to the martyrs of Warsaw will be erected at the site where the City Hall, completely destroyed, once stood. After putting up a heroic resistance to the German attack at the outbreak of the war in 1939, Warsaw became the heart of the underground battle against the Nazi occupation force. The Ghetto Uprising in the spring of 1943 lasted forty-two days; the general Warsaw Uprising in the summer of 1944, sixty-three days. During the years of the Stalinist regime in Poland, the surviving heroes of the Warsaw Uprising were persecuted and tortured in the jails of the security police. The uprising itself was vilified as a "conspiracy against the Red Army come to liberate Poland." But in 1956 the former fighters for the Armja Krajowa were let out of prison and "rehabilitated," and the newspaper *Zycie Warszawy* initiated a campaign to collect funds for the construction of a monument to the heroes of the Warsaw Uprising.

The same drive to provide a lasting memorial to the Polish national heroes, as part of the grand national tradition, has been operative since the beginning of the reconstruction of the martyred capital. There are tablets set in the pavement of every street and square containing the names of fallen heroes. As Soviet pressure began to become oppressive on the Polish Communist regime, the builders of the capital hurried to reconstruct every building that had any connection with the Polish resistance battle. Thus, for example, the Cafe Club where the Polish underground movement carried out its bravest feats against the Nazis in 1943 was early rebuilt. The Cafe Club had been converted into a casino for Nazi officers; in revenge for the murder of 200 Polish patriots, the underground attacked the casino, dynamiting it and killing hundreds of Nazis. The Cafe Club has been replaced by a building which houses the International Press Club. This is a new cultural institution in Communist Poland. Since the October Revolution, the idea has spread to the most important centers of the country. Here the visitor can read foreign newspapers and magazines and listen to lectures by visitors from abroad, particularly from Western countries. In October 1958, when it became known that Boris Pasternak had received the Nobel Prize for literature, a

portrait of the great Soviet poet and novelist was hung in the show windows of the Warsaw International Press Club. For years Poland had been a country of "spiritual exile" for Pasternak; Polish periodicals were the only ones in the Communist world to print Pasternak's poetry.

The International Press Club, Warsaw's window to the West, is just a few feet away from the building that houses the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party. Both buildings are situated in the Nowy Swiat (New World) district which has been completely rebuilt. This district is now the center of the Polish capital's political and diplomatic life. The pre-war political center around what used to be Pilsudski Square (and is now Freedom Square) is still in ruins. Piles of rubble from devastated houses and mansions are all that remain of the colonnades of Colonel Jozef Beck's Foreign Ministry. Among pieces of marble sculpture and wood carvings I saw granite and bronze busts of Stalin and Lenin which had been torn down from various public buildings. In a large barrack a dozen plaster copies of huge statues of Stalin in different poses stood on wooden platforms. One of the workmen confided to me that the statues were to have been poured in bronze and set on the four sides of the Palace of Culture, facing east, west, north and south.

9

THE TRIAL OF POLAND'S BERIA

BY FAR the most important achievement of the October Revolution in Poland has been the liquidation of the hated security police. Although Gomulka has made many concessions to Moscow, one thing he has not done has been to reconstitute the security police. I looked for no documentary evidence that might prove that the huge police apparatus which the previous Com-

munist regime used to maintain itself in power has simply been disguised and still exists in a new form. Far more important to my mind was the popular mood both in the city and the village. I found the people of Poland convinced that the power of the secret police has been broken. For ten years the population was in the grip of paralyzing fear; now they are positive that is all in the past, and any group that tries to revive the police system will have to reckon with bloodshed.

The popular hatred of the security police has not dissolved with its liquidation. Indeed, the hatred is still so strong that many former members of the security force have had to move from the cities where they were posted. They have been refused any kind of work in the state factories which has resulted in many personal tragedies. There were cases of wives of former members of the U.B. (Urzad Bezpieczenstwa) leaving their husbands; their children have been tormented in school. The situation was so bad that Gomulka had to intervene personally with a plea that the people of Poland refrain from persecuting former members of the security police.

In this respect, at least, the proud Polish Communist claim that "Warsaw isn't Moscow" is not merely a slogan. In Soviet Russia, the purge of the police apparatus was simply part of the internal struggle for power. Lavrentia Beria, the Soviet police Minister, was liquidated because he lost to Khrushchev, and Beria's death was the signal for a mass execution of his followers. But in Poland, although the purge of the police apparatus was thorough but bloodless, there were no officially sanctioned lynchings. Nor, in contrast to Moscow, Prague or Budapest, were there any fast trials ending in summary justice in Poland. The trial of the three highest officials in the security police—Jacek Rozanski, Anatol Fejgin and Roman Romkowski—proceeded for several months behind closed doors in the fall of 1957. The only open session was the last, when the verdict was announced. The accused had the benefit of self-selected defense counsel and the right to call witnesses; they could even engage in sharp interchanges with the prosecuting attorney.

The trial of the state versus Rozanski *et al.* took place in Room 17 of the Central Court Building on Warsaw's Leszno Street. The adjacent rooms were the scenes of various commonplace suits:

divorce proceedings (they are a mass phenomenon in Poland nowadays), disputes between neighbors and other such human, private conflicts. The only thing setting Room 17 apart was the two benches occupied by several policemen on guard to prevent the entry of parties not involved in the security police trial.

For several days in succession I saw the accused face to face at the entry to Room 17. I took note of the prosecution's many witnesses as well as of the few witnesses who had the courage to put in a good word for the accused. The defense witnesses testified that the charges against the defendants were highly exaggerated. Most of the sadists in the secret police, these witnesses claimed, were Russians who could barely speak Polish. I also saw the chief defendant Rozanski's counsel, Michael Brojdes. He was a medium-sized man with a bald, bony head, lean, furrowed face, and deep, melancholy eyes.

Though secret, the court proceedings in the case of Rozanski *et al.* were soon common knowledge. A few hours after each session, details of the day's testimony had seeped through the closed doors. The biggest surprise of the hearings was the defendants' insistence that they were being made the scapegoats for the Bierut-Berman regime. The defendants shattered the myth of Boleslaw Bierut as an ardent patriot and great humanitarian that the Communist propaganda had been spreading for years. Bierut was dead and beyond physical harm, but the security police defendants did not spare the survivors of the Stalinist period elite, both those deposed from power and those still retained under Gomulka. The accused went on to name Soviet agents in Poland, including Panteleimon Ponomarenko, the former Soviet Ambassador to Poland, who had been the secret police's chief advisor.

The trial had entered its last stage. The sensational news in the political coffee houses in Warsaw was that Jakub Berman himself had testified. Berman was the former Vice Premier who had been directly above the three defendants. The fact that he had appeared in court as a free man and a witness for the prosecution ended the various theories about his fate that had been circulating in Warsaw. Testifying against his former aides, Berman had washed his hands of any responsibility for the crimes of the security police—

though, in fact, he had controlled the police throughout the entire Stalinist period.

The morning after Berman testified, the relatives of the defendants Fejgin and Romkowski were outspoken in denunciation of the ex-vice-premier. I was talking to the defendants' relatives in the dark court corridor outside Room 17. It was not yet nine o'clock, the hour when the accused were led into the courtroom every morning. Rozanski's wife, a tall, slim woman whose hair was turning gray, had a bundle of books under her arm. She was bringing her husband some novels by Balzac. She told me that during the three years he had spent in prison her husband had been reading mostly French classic literature in the original or in translation, depending on what edition she could find. I asked Madame Rozanski whether her husband was reading any Marxist literature these days. A bitter smile appeared on her lips.

There was a sudden commotion in the corridor. The police guards closed off the entry to the corridor stairs, and we knew the defendants were approaching. The first to come up the stairs was a police officer; he was followed immediately by the defendants. Jacek Rozanski looked terribly emaciated. He was wearing a wrinkled gray coat and carrying a worn leather brief case. Behind Rozanski, Anatol Fejgin walked with a stoop. Bringing up the rear was Roman Romkowski, physically the strongest looking of the three men. Surrounded by armed men, the defendants walked slowly down the long corridor, accompanied by their relatives whispering nervously. It was obvious the prisoners were walking slowly so as to prolong their conversations with their relatives; their police escort did not interfere.

For a moment I felt Rozanski staring at me. He stopped and stood rigid, apparently unable to make out what the stranger was doing in the court corridor. Rozanski whispered to his wife in agitation. The police halted the defendants' relatives at the courtroom door. At the last minute before entering Room 17 Rozanski suddenly turned around and put up two fingers in the air for his wife to see. His wife responded by putting up three fingers. An expression of gratification appeared on Rozanski's pale, troubled face. He disappeared behind the courtroom doors. Later, I asked Isabella Rozanski the meaning of their dumb dialogue. She ex-

plained: "This morning, after many years some relatives of ours returned from Russia. My husband put up two fingers to ask whether my niece had come back with her daughter only. I put up three to tell him my niece's husband had come back, too."

Shortly afterward, I met the relatives who had been repatriated from Russia in Rozanski's home, situated in one of the finest neighborhoods of modern-day Warsaw. It was the same apartment where Jacek Rozanski had lived all those years when his name struck terror in the hearts of millions of Polish citizens. I had some difficulty becoming intimate with Rozanski's family. At first his wife hesitated at my request to meet her relatives. She suspected that my interest in firsthand information about the repatriates from Russia was only a pretext and that my real intention was to talk to her about the trial and her husband. (Her suspicions were well-founded.) She told me that an American journalist had come to see her some time ago, and when he had tried to interview her she had simply "shown him the door," to use her own words.

I took the hint and posed no searching questions about her husband's past. Instead, I limited my questions to the effects of her husband's imprisonment on her own life. Isabella Rozanski told me she had nothing to complain about personally, insofar as her treatment by the men in power went. When her husband was chief of police, she had been in charge of the statistical department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Now she held a similar post in the Ministry of Education. She was positive she was not under observation. All she would tell me about her husband were a few personal details. He had gone through a serious operation and was still suffering greatly. However, he was getting the necessary medical treatment in prison. She could see him once a week and talk to him freely and alone. She told me her husband was reading a great deal of fiction and writing his memoirs.

When our taxi drove up to the house where Madame Rozanski lived, I looked carefully around. There was no one anywhere in sight in the quiet, handsome street. She was right; we were not being followed. A charming, blonde girl opened the door for us. Flinging herself into her mother's arms, Jacek Rozanski's sixteen-year-old daughter Stefcia asked after her father with tears in her eyes. At first Stefcia's replies to my queries about how she was get-

ting along in school were guarded. Gradually, she warmed up and began talking more freely. She told me she was having no trouble whatsoever. Actually, her school chums were being *too* attentive and friendly—it was becoming troublesome.

The large room was filled with bookcases; most of the books were foreign fiction in the original languages. On the wall hung a portrait of Rozanski's brother, known under the pseudonym of Jerzy Borejsza, dictator of the press and of publishing in Poland until his death in 1951. Toward the end of his life Jerzy Borejsza took a daring stand that jeopardized his career. This was in the period from 1948 to 1951 when the police terror was growing more and more oppressive in Poland, and Polish writers were under pressure to produce hymns glorifying Stalin. Borejsza resisted this pressure and came into frequent, sharp conflict with Jakub Berman. That was a critical period for writers in Poland, and Borejsza's strong stand in their defense won him the friendship of the older writers. He encouraged them to keep producing, paying huge honorariums for work that was in contradiction to the official "socialist realism" line. Since he had a large network of newspapers and magazines under his thumb, Borejsza achieved popularity—popularity so great that at one time Communist Party people were looking askance at Jerzy Borejsza's growing influence among the Polish intellectuals.

Borejsza met a tragic end. In 1951 he was in an automobile accident from which he emerged paralyzed; he died shortly afterward. There were rumors that he had been murdered for opposing the official Party line. Some people went so far as to assert that Jerzy Borejsza had been persecuted by his own brother, Jacek Rozanski. But none of these rumors had any foundation in reality. People in the know in Warsaw told me that Borejsza and Rozanski were on the best of terms until the end. Apparently, family feeling was stronger than political differences.

The first time I met Rozanski he was acting in his investigative capacity. It was just after the Kielce pogrom of July 4, 1946, when a mob of several hundred fanatical Poles flung themselves at a few survivors of Kielce Jewry. Wielding axes, knives and iron bars, the mob murdered forty-two men, women and children. The pogrom-

ists were incited by a religious blood libel of the traditional medieval variety; the Jews were accused of murdering a Christian child to use his blood in making the Passover matzoth. (Nowadays, people in Poland say outright that both the blood libel and the Kielce pogrom were staged by the Soviet secret police as a convenient pretext for a full-scale military expedition against the Polish nationalist underground movement. At that time the underground was attacking Soviet military garrisons in Poland as well as murdering lone, defenseless Jews.)

Rozanski came to Kielce at the time along with a security police commission to investigate what had happened. There was a young officer with a Van Dyke beard heading the commission. Rozanski, who was dressed in civilian clothing, introduced the officer to the journalists as General Korecki. But the moment the "general" opened his mouth to make an official statement, it was obvious to us we were dealing with a Soviet police agent—he spoke Polish with difficulty. During the three days that followed I observed Rozanski at the court martial of the eleven men accused of murder. He often talked secretly with the prosecuting attorney and judge, and it was clear that he was really running the proceedings.

In the course of time, as the Stalinist regime of Bierut and Berman grew more and more powerful in Poland, Rozanski's personal strength increased and, with it, his resort to terrorist methods. Not until the execution of Lavrentia Beria, the head of the Soviet secret police, in December 1953 was the unrestrained ruthlessness of Rozanski's police apparatus finally halted. With Beria's liquidation complaints about security police abuses began to pour in. There were insinuations at the time that the security police had been acting on directives straight from Beria's apparatus behind the back of the Polish Communist Party. There was the beginning of a "reorganization" of the police but no executions, not even any arrests. Stanislaw Radkiewicz, the Minister of Police, was downgraded to the unimportant post of Minister in charge of State Farms (the PGR). Jacek Rozanski was made director of the state publishing company, P.I.W. His nomination to this post was distasteful to the Polish writers, who regarded the transfer of a police chief to director of publications as an affront to literature. It was,

they thought, particularly ironic that Rozanski had been "deported" to publishing as a punishment for his misdeeds as Chief of Police, whereas Rozanski's brother, Jerzy Borejsza, had resisted the Stalinization of literature toward the end of his life.

The writers protested louder still when Rozanski applied the same dictatorial attitudes that had earned him hostility as Police Chief to the world of publishing. Arrogantly, he threw manuscripts submitted by prominent writers back in their faces. A few months after Rozanski's appointment as publishing Czar, he was suddenly arrested. A number of Communist veterans active in the Party had been kept in prison for many months without trial. On their release they went straight to Boleslaw Bierut and complained about the inquisitorial methods that Rozanski and his aides had used during the investigations.

The first of the released veteran Communists to come to Bierut was an old woman who came straight from prison, bundle in hand. She walked to Belvedere Palace where Bierut then lived and stayed until she got to see him. Bierut knew her well. She told him a frightful story of how the U.B. agents had shot her young daughter in their home when the child had tried to resist her mother's arrest. The Party leadership, finally moved by this and similar revelations, took steps to curb the U.B.'s previously unlimited power. With the help of Moscow, the U.B. was terrorizing the Polish Communist Party itself, arresting and torturing prominent comrades without the knowledge of the Politburo. A special Control Ministry was then set up, headed by Roman Zambrowski, who by that time was taking a daring position within the Party toward the super-power of the Soviet NKVD police apparatus as it operated in Poland. Zambrowski's ministry investigated Rozanski's investigative committee in the U.B. with the result that Rozanski was dismissed and shortly afterward arrested.

Actually, Rozanski was tried twice, the first time in 1955. The trial was conducted in strict secrecy and only the innermost circles of Party leadership knew what it revealed. On December 24, 1955, a small box appeared in a corner of page 3 of the official Party paper, *Trybuna Ludu*. The heading ran, "Five Years' Imprisonment for Abuse of Power." The text was as follows:

> "The district court of the city of Warsaw has studied the case of Jacek Rozanski, formerly director of the investigative department of the security police. Rozanski was accused of abuse of power, insofar as he used forbidden investigative methods himself as well as tolerating their use by functionaries of the security police who were under his supervision. During the court proceedings, Rozanski confessed his guilt, expressing regret for his crimes. The district court has sentenced Rozanski to five years' imprisonment."

This modest notice provided food for conversation throughout Warsaw for many days. People talked about it in coffee houses and government offices; everywhere the leniency of the sentence was greeted with dissatisfied amazement. At the time people said that Rozanski had got off easily because Boleslaw Bierut had interceded in his behalf. However, after Bierut's death the charges against Rozanski were revived. This happened at the historic Eighth Plenum of October 1956 which brought Gomulka to power. The old Socialist leader Leon Wudzki cited horrifying details of crimes committed by Rozanski's investigative department. Soon after Wudzki's speech preparations were made to try Rozanski again; this time, together with his two chief aides, Anatol Fejgin and Roman Romkowski. Fejgin and Romkowski had a far longer Communist past than Rozanski. They knew from personal experience what it felt like to go through a brutal police examination. Fejgin had experienced it in pre-war Poland under the Pilsudski regime, Romkowski in Soviet Russia, where he was in prison for several years without trial. The two men were given high posts in the newly formed secret police when the Lublin government was constituted after World War II. Apparently, their years in prison were considered good qualifications for important police posts.

When Rozanski was dismissed from his position as Vice Minister and Chief of the Investigative Department of the U.B. in 1955, Romkowski took his place. At the trial, which was delayed until November 1957, both men received identical sentences—fifteen years' imprisonment. Anatol Fejgin got off with a milder sentence of twelve years. Rozanski and Fejgin, who had kept together all during the proceedings, chatting continually, received their verdicts with ironic, unsurprised smiles. Apparently they had expected this. A few days before the verdict was announced, Rozan-

ski's wife told me her husband knew he would get fifteen years. Romkowski, on the other hand, seemed genuinely shattered at being meted out the same sentence as his former boss.

Romkowski was not the only one to be surprised. The witnesses and large audience of leading Communists present at the last, open session when the verdict was announced were all amazed. The general interpretation was that this was a purely mechanical application of justice, where the position each of the defendants held, rather than his personal responsibility, was the only consideration weighed. Romkowski had taken over Rozanski's authority; hence, he was given the same sentence as Rozanski, despite the fact that he had partially halted the brutal investigative methods that had been in vogue under Rozanski and might have expected a lighter sentence.

A number of leading Communists and non-Communists were named during the security police trial as having been held in prison for periods of between three and five years without trial. They had all been given the third degree, including the new Defense Minister General Marian Spychalski. The verdict featured the name of the man who had been credited in 1949 with heading a huge political conspiracy in Communist Poland—Wlodzimierz Lechowicz. Lechowicz had been secretly tried and sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment. He had served six years of his sentence when he was released and rehabilitated in 1956. Now Lechowicz is officially the Vice President of the tolerated Democratic Party. Also involved in the faked Lechowicz espionage case was General M. Tatar. He too got fifteen years and was rehabilitated before serving his full sentence. The general now has his old army position back.

10

CHERRIES, FISH, AND STALINIST JUSTICE

It was in the war against the underground jingoistic bands that the police apparatus of Communist Poland developed. The police functionaries and Party bigwigs sent to put things right in the small towns acted like real dictators, riding roughshod over the local population.

Now the court dockets are crowded with cases involving charges against former officials and Party workers. The trials drag on endlessly, and in many cases the charges are dismissed. True, officially Gomulka reintroduced the principles of democratic legal procedures. He did away with the old system under which the local Party secretary told the judge what his verdict should be. Nevertheless, certain officials in the prosecutors' offices, police and town councils exploit the new democratic procedures to protect the accused Party officials—they were all in partnership in stealing communal funds. The Gomulka regime has to fight on two fronts in the provinces: against corruption still protected by the Party and executive apparatus and against the demoralization or ineffectuality of the court authority, often in the hands of officials and judges who are unqualified and unprofessional.

One day, purely by accident, I heard a personal confession that gave me a full and unfalsified picture of the background of judicial corruption behind these trials. It was a Sunday afternoon in winter, and I was sitting in a crowded restaurant in a Warsaw suburb. The air was heavy with cigaret smoke and the smell of vodka. Near my table sat two young men whose threadbare clothing was in sharp contrast to their intelligent-looking faces. A few empty vodka bottles were on the table in front of them, but they did not seem

drunk as did almost everyone else in the restaurant. Before long we started a conversation. I complained about the beer. Noticing that I was a stranger, one of them suddenly remembered the old Polish tradition of hospitality. He went straight to the kitchen and ordered the waiter to serve me better beer. We had never met before, but he sat down at my table and, without any questioning on my part, went right into his life story. I had the feeling he was eager to get it off his chest.

He and his friend, who sat silently nodding his head in agreement, had both belonged to the underground Armja Krajowa (Home Army) during the Nazi occupation. "Our battalion took part in the Warsaw Uprising," he told me. "Out of 350 of us, only 18 survived. Just eight of us are in the country now. The rest emigrated to different countries." He went on to tell me about his experiences after the tragic uprising of 1944. The Polish capital was in ruins, and the Nazis sent practically the whole population off to labor camps in Poland and Germany. After the liberation, he went to Belgium, where he worked as a coal miner in the Liége area. He returned to Poland in 1946 after being away from his native country for two years.

"I never belonged to any Party before," he said. "But the new government's ambitions to rebuild Warsaw made me enthusiastic. I was carried along by the optimistic mood that gripped a great many people at that time. So I joined the Communist Party, began to study and advanced quickly. After a two-year legal course I was given a high judicial post. I was named Chairman of the District Court in M." This detail sheds interesting light on how the Communist regime built up its own kind of legal system in the People's Democracy. Semitrained Party members were given judicial appointments; the verdicts they rendered made a mockery of justice, because the local Party secretaries always had the last word in every verdict. That was when my informant grew disillusioned with the Party. His disillusionment grew stronger during the period of the police regime.

He told me about one case that was a typical example of the bureaucratic Communist economy applied to the Polish provinces. The case involved a transport of fresh cherries that an agricultural cooperative gave the city of M.'s food cooperative to sell. There

was a big crop and the price of cherries had fallen steeply. So the food cooperative managers decided not to sell for a while, hoping that the prices would go up in a couple of days. Unluckily, the cherries spoiled, and the whole transport, several tons of cherries, had to be thrown into the local lake. The fish in the lake were poisoned by the rotten cherries—the fish belonged to the fishermen's cooperative. There was a fearful scandal, and the case was brought to court. The food cooperative faced charges from both the farmers and the fishermen.

"It was apparent from the very beginning," the ex-judge told me, "that the food cooperative managers ought to be punished. But the Party committee took a different view of the matter; I got a hint to find for the defendant."

In this, as in many similar instances, the inexperienced young judge followed the Party's dictates. But his conscience plagued him, until he began to drown his troubles in vodka. One day when he was drunk, the District Court Judge criticized the authorities' new decrees in a public restaurant. These decrees raised prices far above wages, which were barely sufficient anyway. The Judge had no idea that the Party had been keeping him under surveillance for some time. The moment he spoke out in a public place in loud criticism of the regime a secret agent from the security police came over from a nearby table and arrested him.

"I was a judge, and my person should have been sacrosanct, but that didn't help," my companion explained. "I was put in the city prison. True, the next morning I was released, but the Party committee had achieved its purpose. I was compromised. You know the trick," he smiled bitterly. " 'The District Court Judge arrested for drunkenness.' I was immediately discharged from my post, thrown out of the Party—my fate was sealed. My old friends shied away from me, and I couldn't find a job. I left the city, tried to get a job in another provincial town, but the Party's unfailing hand reached me everywhere. They never let me stop suffering for my recalcitrance. . . ."

What happened to the ex-judge after that reads like Maxim Gorky's autobiography. His early dreams of pursuing a legal career fell to pieces. Years of hunger, misery, humiliation destroyed his ambition. Those years were a real education for him; he learned to

view the promised ideal world of Communism with sober eyes.

"I never slept twice in the same place," he went on. "I carried bundles on trains, I worked in a bakery, I was a helper in a slaughter house. I did everything I could to make money to take care of my wife who had become very sick. The final blow was my wife's death. I was on the verge of suicide. Then came the October Revolution, and it set everybody's heart beating with new hope. My spirits picked up. When Gomulka came to power, the Party 're-habilitated' me and offered me a chance to join again. But my disillusionment was too deep; I decided to wait. Things have grown better in Poland. The U.B., the security police, has disappeared. But many of the old bigwigs have remained in the Party. The changes are very slow, and I haven't made up my mind whether or not to join the Party again. Meanwhile, I work hard in a metal factory. I want to keep my free time for myself, not give it up to the Party. I read, I study, and when I feel bad, I do what everybody else does in Poland—I drown my troubles in drink." He pointed to the vodka bottles on the table.

I rose from the table with the feeling that I had been sitting in that smoke-filled restaurant for an eternity. All in all, the conversation had lasted no longer than an hour. But it was an experience of a generation I had heard in this remarkable life story of a Polish worker who had gone from underground fighter to judge to homeless wanderer.

11

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF JAKUB BERMAN

Although the Polish security police was officially liquidated, its shadow will long continue to haunt the people of Poland. Many members of the Gomulka regime have the guilty knowledge that

they, too, share the responsibility for the crimes of the Stalinist era. They know at heart that they are as culpable as their purged comrades. The one man who more than anyone else has remained the symbolic embodiment of the Stalinist era in Poland is Jakub Berman. One need but mention his name for people to become silent with embarrassment, then switch the conversation to another subject. This is particularly apt to occur when one is talking to a Party big-wig, a government official or a writer who regarded Berman as the infallible leader of Poland and basked in his favors before the October revolt. These people seem unusually sensitive on the subject of Berman nowadays. I asked a number of them what had happened to the former dictator of Poland: What is Berman doing, where does he live, how can I reach him? There was no answer to be had from official sources. They suggested, most politely of course, that I would be better off letting sleeping dogs lie and not trying to contact Jakub Berman.

I did find one man, a prominent Polish statesman who had been off-stage during the police terror days, who, speaking somewhat sympathetically of Jakub Berman, added that he himself was in occasional contact with the ex-dictator. My distinguished informant went on to comment that he tended to accept Berman's own version of his role at the end of the police regime. Berman, he believed, *had* tried to resist Moscow orders for fake treason trials and that was why Jakub Berman had fallen into disfavor with Stalin at the end. What is more, this distinguished statesman, who occupies a prominent position in the present Polish regime, stated that he could speak from personal experience. In 1954 the secret police attempted to try him on trumped-up charges. A would-be witness (he mentioned the witness' name), a former provincial governor in Poznan during the Pilsudski regime, had been imprisoned. The police approached the prisoner with a proposition: they would let him off with an easy sentence if he would testify in a prospective trial against a group of high government officials, including my informant. Berman blocked the frame-up.

This was one of the few things I had ever heard said in Berman's defense. The very mystery surrounding his person strengthened my desire to meet face to face with the Gray Eminence of Stalinist Poland, the man who before the October revolt had con-

trolled the two most important elements in the country, the police and the censorship. For ten years this man had decided the fate of millions of people. I was impelled to find out what he was doing and what he was thinking. What happens to a man who has stood at the summit of power for a decade and then has been allowed to live only through the generosity of his successor in power? (Gomulka had saved Berman from the popular wrath on the one hand and from the vicious intrigues of the hard-bitten Stalinists who had executed Berman's orders, on the other.)

Unusual situations dictate unusual measures. I took the horse by the bit and telephoned Berman's home from my room in the Bristol Hotel. To my astonishment, the deep, cultured voice of Jakub Berman answered. During an earlier visit to Poland on the eve of the October revolt, I had made vain efforts to gain access to Berman when he was Vice Premier and Politburo member. Stubbornly, I kept telephoning only to be shunted from secretary to secretary, government office to government office, hearing everywhere the same cold, unfriendly "No!" This time I was speaking straight to the former master himself. Berman expressed astonishment that I should be interested in seeing him, but he immediately agreed to receive me. When I told him that my wife, who was visiting Poland with me, wished to join us, he politely replied without a second thought that, of course, he would be glad to meet her too.

Berman lives in the same apartment house on fashionable Nowowiejska Street that he lived in when he was in power. That winter morning the street was empty except for an occasional passerby. Carefully looking around, I determined that the house was not being watched; there was no trace of a detective. Berman opened the door for us himself, then led us into his study, lined with bookcases. Against the wall stood a desk piled high with folders of documents; on a corner of the desk was a metal-framed photograph of Jakub Berman and the deceased Boleslaw Bierut.

Berman, a medium-sized man, a youngish fifty-five, did not show the slightest embarrassment. There was not a wrinkle on his full, smooth-shaven face or high forehead. The lively, bright eyes under his thick black eyebrows betrayed no sign of discomfort or depression. The only sign of Berman's awareness of the incongru-

ity of the situation was the faint, ironic smile that played about his finely chiseled, delicate lips throughout our meeting.

The study window looked out on a courtyard. I noticed a stone cross rising above a dilapidated, walled-in monastery enclave. Catching my glance, Berman explained: "That's an institution for the incurable run by the Order of the Felician Sisters." Smiling, he aded, "You can see, I'm under good supervision!" Then, answering all my questions unhesitatingly, Jakub Berman gave me his views on the latest political and social developments in Poland and the Communist world in general. Berman repeatedly resorted to worn-out Communist slogans along the Party line. Nevertheless, despite the unsensational nature of his "revelations," Berman took pains to warn me that our conversation was strictly private; for understandable reasons, he was refraining from any public statements whatsoever.

His personal attitude? Berman talked like a man on the outside of events. He played the part of the objective observer with no personal axe to grind. His analysis of the present situation was calm, unemotional; as a matter of fact, there was a hint of optimism, if anything, in his view of the future. Personally, Berman made it quite clear, he was completely out of the political arena; he was busy but with less risky matters. At the instigation of the Polish Academy of Science (PAN), Berman is writing a history of the social and political developments in Poland between the two World Wars (a sufficiently distant and uncontroversial period). The state archives supply him with material that he works on at home. His wife is continuing her career; she is a dentist and professor of oral medicine at Warsaw University.

In general, I had the impression that Jakub Berman was far from being a broken man. True, his sudden downfall from the loftiest pedestal of power in Poland had compelled him to withdraw from society into the bosom of his immediate family. Yet he seemed to be taking this sudden reversal with philosophic calm; it was just another phase in his stormy career to which he was fatalistically resigned. He was not taking what had happened to him as a *personal* blow; therefore, I could not picture Berman ever having attempted suicide as the rumors circulating in Warsaw at the time had had it.

There was a ring at the door. Opening the door, Berman admitted a little five-year-old blond boy whom he took by the hand and introduced as his grandson. (Berman's daughter lives next door.) Setting the lively boy on his lap, Jakub Berman resumed his conversation with us. As he talked, he drew small horses and ships on a sheet of paper to entertain the child. Before our amused eyes, the former dictator of Poland was transformed into an ideal grandfather.

News of my visit to Jakub Berman quickly spread through the coffee houses frequented by Warsaw journalists. There were skeptics who insisted it was just the empty bragging of an American newspaperman. Still, everyone wanted to know details about my visit. Particularly curious were those same government officials who had given me the friendly advice to "stay clear of the Berman affair." They were amazed that my story was so un-sensational. Having lived for ten years in the climate of mystery and conspiracy surrounding the person of Jakub Berman, these officials found the very ordinariness of Berman's life the most stunning revelation of all.

At the present time, Berman has no chance of getting back to power. There are simply no social forces in Poland interested in bringing him back; he is completely isolated. On the one hand, the creative intellectuals hate him because of his high-handed activity as the cultural dictator of Poland. On the other hand, the Stalinists of the Natolin faction are after his neck because they think that by using Berman as a scapegoat they can cleanse themselves of their own criminal collaboration in his Stalinist regime. Despite the isolation of the ex-dictator, Jakub Berman's name has remained to this day the symbol of the Communist conspiracy that raised him to the height of power in Communist Poland.

Berman's father was a well-to-do Warsaw merchant. During the twenties, employed at one of the small news agencies in Warsaw, Jakub Berman was engaged in the Communist youth movement of Poland. Quickly he rose to leadership in the underground Communist hierarchy. In the thirties he had a hand in the biggest strikes in the country, and, although he was always the master conspirator, he never fell into the hands of the Polish police.

At the outbreak of World War II in September 1939, Berman made the long trek to Russia with hundreds of thousands of other Polish citizens. He was one of a group of journalists that the Polish government evacuated in a special train to keep them out of the hands of the Nazis. Throughout the weeks of their flight en route to Russia, the journalists who shared Berman's company had not the slightest suspicion that he had connections with the Communist world. It was not until they reached the Soviet side that Berman revealed his true colors. Immediately making contact with the staff of the Red Army, he was sent ahead to Moscow. There, Berman speedily pushed ahead into a leading position in the group of Polish Communists organized as the Union of Polish Patriots, the group that later became the Lublin regime.

In 1944 the Lublin government was set up in Poland, backed by the bayonets of the Red Army. Although Berman had the superficially insignificant post of Undersecretary of the Council of Ministers, he set the line for the new government; all political and diplomatic nominations required his consent. When the Lublin government moved to Warsaw in 1945, Berman was the real power in Poland. (People in the know insist that Berman had a direct telephone line with Stalin in the Kremlin.) Berman's office was next door to that of the then Prime Minister Edward Osubka-Morawski; the Prime Minister issued no statement without Berman's approval. The same was true later when Jozef Cyrankiewicz succeeded Osubka-Morawski.

During the last few years of his domination, when police terror was rampant in Poland, Berman began to emerge from behind the scenes. He used to appear at the international Communist meetings and at official government affairs in Poland, where he sat between Boleslaw Bierut, the Communist Party's General Secretary, and the Prime Minister. Eventually Berman moved up to the post of Vice Prime Minister, a position from which he exerted virtually unlimited power in Poland.

With the death of Josef Stalin in March 1953, Berman's star began to fade. The first to rebel against him were the writers who objected to his high-handed treatment of culture. Berman's authority received the decisive blow at a meeting of the Polish Writers' Union held in August 1955. The occasion for the meeting was the

public furor created by Adam Wazyk's *Poem for Adults*. Jakub Berman came to the meeting in person. Opening the debate with a violent attack on Adam Wazyk and others of his ilk, he upbraided the writers for having gone too far in their criticism of the regime. His appearance at the meeting was a sensation, but the mood of revolt against Moscow was by then so strong in Warsaw that some of the writers dared stand up to Berman and interrupt his threats with strong cries of defiance. The three who were notably courageous were the poets Antoni Slonimski and Mieczyslaw Jastrun and the great novelist Maria Dombrowska. The authors' objections to Berman reached a crescendo when he demanded that the officers of the Writers' Union resign to be replaced by a new administration composed of orthodox Communist writers headed by Jerzy Putrament. That was the last straw; the Union as a whole protested. The writers insisted they would not continue the meeting until Jakub Berman and the people with him, who were not members of the Writers' Union, left the hall. Berman walked out, humiliated, and never again appeared at a public meeting.

That was the last convulsion of the Bierut-Berman regime. Shortly thereafter, Jakub Berman resigned from the Politburo of the Polish United Workers' Party; a few months later, he resigned as Vice Prime Minister. At the historic Eighth Plenum Berman was attacked both by the Stalinists of the Natolin Group and the anti-Stalinists. The Natolin group blamed Berman for all the evils of the Stalin regime; the anti-Stalinists rejected Berman's defense that he had done his best in an impossible situation—he had been at the mercy of Moscow. His only defense was the silence of Gomulka.

12

THE POLISH ECONOMIC MODEL

A WEAK and enervated Poland is slowly emerging from the shadows after having been done almost to death by the ravages of war, the mass murder and pillage of the Nazi occupation and prolonged exposure to the nostrums of the Stalinist economic doctors. By the time of its October 1956 revolution, Poland had been brought to the brink of economic ruin by a regime that ruthlessly followed the Moscow-prescribed course for building Socialism in a hurry. The forced collectivization of agriculture had reduced to near starvation a country where food had always been cheap and abundant. The drive to industrialization had resulted in the monstrously disproportionate growth of heavy industry at the expense of the production of the most essential consumer goods. Although it is one of the biggest coal producers in Europe, Poland was left without enough fuel for her population because the Soviets had first claim on her coal. Even though the world was thrilled by the courage of the intellectuals who demanded freedom for Poland, it was not their voices which moved the Poznan workers out in the streets. The brutal fact was that the workers and their families were hungry.

The economic reforms which Gomulka has carried out are officially described as marking Poland's own path to Socialism. One of the revelations of the Polish revolution has been the elasticity of the term "building Socialism." In the light of Stalin's practices, Socialism had come to be regarded as a method of subjecting the entire economy of a given country to a speedy industrialization under centralized control, regardless of the sacrifices imposed on the population. But Socialism, theoretically, also means improving the living conditions of the working classes, and it is this definition

of Socialism that is implied in the new Polish economic course. The dominating concern of the Gomulka regime seems to be to satisfy the people's daily needs and to raise their living standards. He is trying to do this even at the price of supporting private initiative and slowing down the process of collectivization.

The most "revolutionary" feature of Poland's Economic Model is its recognition of the right of the peasant to quit the collectives and return to private farming. This movement started spontaneously after Gomulka at the Eighth Plenum bluntly admitted that forced collectivization had failed. The peasants accepted this confession as almost an official signal to liquidate the entire collective agricultural economy. They broke up the cooperatives, prosperous and poor alike. In fact, the prosperous collectives were the first to be broken up in many areas, because there were profitable farms to divide among the members. Only run-down, unproductive cooperatives remained because they were propped up by government subsidy.

During the October events, 8,000 out of a total of 10,000 cooperative farms announced their dissolution. As a result of the new agricultural policy, reflected in the so-called "instructions," fallow land has virtually disappeared in Poland. Intensified cultivation is visible all over the country and can be observed from train windows. Every piece of land, even land close to the railroad tracks, is plowed and new houses are springing up in the villages. Prices of land had soared fantastically until the state placed some 1,250,000 acres of land from government reserve on the market. However, the total area of a private property was not to exceed 37.5 acres.

Agricultural machinery has been made available for purchase by both cooperative and private farms. Peasant savings in communal banks have gone up sharply in contrast to previous years when peasants, distrusting the regime, hoarded all sorts of valuable articles they could pick up on the market, paying fantastic prices for them.

After dissolving the collective farms and restoring the freedom to buy and sell land Gomulka promised a gradual reduction in compulsory deliveries of grain at prices pegged at less than a half of the free market prices.

In his concluding speech at the Third Party Congress in March

1959 Gomulka acknowledged the backwardness of Polish agriculture. He cited the amazing fact that "horses used by the farmers consume more grain than the entire urban population of the country." Even though he had once shocked the Communist world by describing the tractor as the "specter of collectivization," he had to make the peasant understand that the day of the farmer's horse was done. Gomulka took great pains at the Third Party Congress to convince the individual farmer that the only way he could enjoy the use of agricultural machinery would be through the development of the cooperative movement, the so-called Farmers' Circles (Kolka Rolnicze). To still their fears of a return to forced collectivization, he stressed the voluntary character of the cooperative movement and emphasized that this method of "solving Poland's agricultural problems is different from that of any other Socialist country."

In the economic field, Professor Oscar Lange, former professor of economics at the University of Chicago and Communist Poland's first Ambassador to Washington, is the theoretician who drafted the basic principles for the "Polish Economic Model" to which the Gomulka regime committed itself. As Chairman of the State Economic Council, Professor Lange still supervises the drafting of blueprints for the reforms which are being introduced into the economic structure of Poland.

The State Economic Council is an advisory body without executive power and, as such, is treated scornfully by the so-called "revisionists," who consider the recommendations of the Council to be mere "paper work" because the proposed reforms are adopted very slowly by the executive branches of the government. On the other hand, the Economic Council is also the target for attack by the die-hard Stalinists as a source of revisionist heresy in the economic field. Nevertheless, the trends in the Polish economy since the 1956 October revolt point to the development of a Polish Economic Model unique in the Communist world and vastly different from the Soviet pattern.

The main principles of current Polish economic development are defined in a study by Professor Lange entitled "Some Problems Relating to the Polish Road to Socialism." Professor Lange

points out that the refusal to follow the Soviet path toward Socialism does not imply "revisionism." The method of building Socialism under a "dictatorship of the proletariat" must be chosen according to the historical, economic and social conditions of the given country. Analyzing the Soviet pattern, Lange sees it as growing out of the needs of a vast backward country where the urgency of military preparedness spurred the development of heavy industry regardless of the sacrifices which were entailed. During the Stalinist period, this "war economy" developed into a distorted system of "bureaucratic centralism growing beyond necessity by its own inertia." Lange continues his analysis by showing how the blind aping of the Soviet pattern by the People's Democracies, including Poland, resulted in heavy damage to their national economies.

The program of reforms in the Polish economy proceeds on two levels: democratization and decentralization. Out of the October turmoil arose the institution of the Workers' Councils in the factories, which challenged the arbitrary power of the managers and Party bureaucrats. The State Economic Council, under the supervision of Lange, prepared a set of rules defining the rights and responsibilities of the Workers' Councils. However, the experiences of the first period of the Gomulka regime in this respect were not encouraging and many revisions were made.

The decentralization of economic management in Poland proceeds along entirely different lines than in the Soviet Union. The Soviet economic reforms so widely heralded by Nikita Khrushchev have relaxed the grip of the central government only slightly. Control of industry has been transferred by Khrushchev from the liquidated ministries in Moscow to regional economic councils. This reform does not dilute industry's dependence on government and the Party bureaucracy although it does transfer the government's control to lower regional levels.

In Poland, new economic units with a greater degree of independence from central government and Party bodies are being created. The previous system of industrial management in Poland, patterned after the Soviet Union, consisted of more than a dozen central ministries and of a few hundred so-called central boards controlling one or several branches of industry. The ministries and the central boards transmitted the funds allocated by the state

budget to the industrial enterprises together with production quotas assigned by the state commission for economic planning.

The blueprints for the new economic model in Poland are based primarily on greater independence for enterprises and are aimed at spurring industrial initiative by the workers and technical personnel. The much-criticized central boards are being replaced by industrial associations. The difference between the two systems is fundamental. While the central boards were administrative units, distributing funds from the state budget, the associations are to control only funds provided through direct payments by industry. The state will provide funds only for large-scale investments, such as construction of new plants or the remodeling of old ones. The industrial associations will collect part of the profits and amortization funds from industrial enterprises and redistribute them for repairs, improvement, research, purchase and sales apparatus and other services growing out of the needs of the associated enterprises. Control and guidance of the enterprises by the association will be maintained through a board consisting of the directors of all the enterprises within the association.

The second feature of the Polish Economic Model is based on Lange's theory of the necessity of "expanding the social alliances" of the regime. "The proletariat itself cannot build Socialism," Lange says; "it is too weak." The most natural "ally" would normally be the peasantry, but Professor Lange admits that "winning over the peasant masses in support of the development of Socialism" is Poland's most difficult task. Admitting openly Poland's failure in the Socialization of agriculture, Professor Lange makes the interesting comment that "a large proportion of the peasantry would like to have Socialism in the cities and private small commodity economy in the countryside." Taking into account the resistance of the Polish peasants toward all forms of collectivism, Lange predicts that the building of Socialism in agriculture will be an extremely difficult task but "by no means a hopeless one." On the other hand, Lange considers the intelligentsia an extremely important "ally" in building Socialism.

> "I have the highest respect for the intelligentsia. What is more, I will say that traditional Marxist theory probably attaches too little importance to the intelligentsia, especially to its role in production.

> All the great revolutions in technology, atomic energy, automation, etc. bring to the forefront the exceptional role of the intelligentsia in the production process. A Marxist analysis of this phenomenon is undoubtedly necessary."

The next important "social ally" to be included in the task of building Socialism is, paradoxically enough, the petty bourgeoisie, the individual tradesmen, artisans and small capitalist producers, who constitute about 12 to 15 per cent of Poland's population. Professor Lange recommends measures to encourage their private initiative, particularly in the field of production. The orthodox Marxists see in this feature of the Polish Economic Model no more than a temporary relaxation of pressures against private enterprise, a relaxation dictated by economic necessities similar to the Soviet NEP (New Economic Policy) of the twenties. As a result, the small producer and tradesman in Poland is skeptical about the duration of his new freedom. Nevertheless, the revival of private initiative in Poland cannot be equated with the Soviet NEP, because it is not likely under Gomulka to be reversed as swiftly as it was in the Soviet Union. Gomulka's return to power created a new political climate of gradualism in Poland, which is opposed to the use of rigid arbitrariness in enforcing its economic policies.

One of the principal reforms recommended by Lange and his associate, Professor Czeslaw Bobrowski, is the introduction of a uniform price system based on the law of value, thus ending the chaos which existed when prices for the same item differed widely depending on who the buyer was and how important his purchase was to the immediate economic objectives of the regime. Only such a revised, uniform price system will make it possible to judge the profitability of a particular enterprise and thus end the system of government subventions for unhealthy deficit enterprises.

Because of the current price system, factories striving for greater profit often produce items whose importance to the general economy is minor. "Our price policy should be such," says Lange, "that the items most needed by society are the most profitable to produce" as is the case in a free economy. Hence, the essence of Lange's price theory for the Polish Economic Model can be sum-

marized as follows: the state fixes prices, but in doing so it must base the price structure on the law of value as well as on the conditions of the market.

The authors of this price reform admit that the goal they have adopted will take years to reach. Meanwhile, the effort to achieve uniform prices and a revived free market in the midst of a drastic shortage of goods has resulted in a strong upward trend in prices. Price adjustments are also being made in the field of government-subsidized services and such items as rent, books, entertainment and transportation. This last measure is being criticized as contradictory to the general tendency to raise the living standard of the population, but on the other hand it emphasizes the tendency to limit subsidies and extend the principle of profitability. Thus the fundamental thesis of the Polish Economic Model is a "Socialist free market economy," a paradox which the orthodox Marxists consider unattainable. However Professor Lange's theories of econometry are gaining authority even in the Soviet Union where economists are trying to develop new methods for determining profitability.

The new trend in central planning and investment has found expression in the field of public building. What this means in practice is vividly illustrated by the new building policy. In sharp contrast with previous years, no new offices, government or Party buildings were erected after October 1956. More than that, many conference rooms in government ministries—which the Poles had dubbed "mincowki" after Hilary Minc, the economic dictator of the previous regime—have been converted into motion picture theaters. The huge Party school on one of the main Warsaw thoroughfares has been transformed into a music school. Another feature of the new trend in building is the appearance of a large number of small two-family units, which replace the institutional Soviet-type apartment buildings.

The weakest area in the government-controlled economy is distribution. Even the official newspapers concede that so far as service in stores and restaurants is concerned, Poland is the most backward country in Europe. Recently a Polish daily published a picture of a modern department store with the following caption:

"This department store boasts the most modern equipment for the benefit and convenience of the customer. However, it is not in Warsaw; it is in Western Berlin."

Immediately after the October revolution, the new regime issued tens of thousands of licenses to storekeepers and artisans, but the authorities failed to provide the new enterprises with the necessary goods and raw materials. As a result, the owners of the new stores and workshops resorted to illegal means, often plain stealing, to obtain materials from government factories and warehouses. The police measures enacted after these abuses were discovered gave rise to rumors that the government was planning to liquidate all private enterprises and to withdraw the licenses just granted.

During my stay in Warsaw, I witnessed a police raid on the notorious Rozycki Bazar, a market comprising hundreds of small shops and booths specializing in goods unobtainable in government stores, particularly nylons and other American articles which Poles receive from American relatives. Among the items confiscated by the police were several hundred illegally imported Swiss watches and a large number of American banknotes. There were many arrests, and owners of small businesses throughout Warsaw were thrown into a panic. However, a few days later, when I returned to the Rozycki Bazar, I found business going on as usual except for the few booths which had been closed. Several dealers to whom I talked said that the police had not mistreated them and held them only for a few hours.

The fact is that private trade gets most of its goods directly from the state enterprises; the small businessmen are on hand to buy up every new transport of merchandise. They are far more imaginative in catching the eye of buyers than are the cooperative stores. The private traders know how to enhance the value of a woman's dress or blouse by sewing on a pretty button or putting a colored ribbon here or there; thus, they can sell their goods at double or triple the price. Sometimes all they have to do is wrap a pair of gloves or shirt in a handsome box to raise the price of the item. The shoppers, disgruntled at the poor service in the state establishments, are glad to buy in the private shops which cater to the popular taste.

Particularly striking is the growth of small industries. Thousands of little shops—shoemakers', tailors', carpenters', mechanics', etc.—spring up every month. A large percentage of these artisans are recent repatriates from Russia, who brought along tools given to them as compensation for their many years of slave labor. There is also a significant change in the composition of Polish handicrafts. While until recently most of the privately owned shops were bakeries and butcher stores, at present 200 different trades are represented with a large proportion of masons and metal workers indicative of the growth of private housing. In 1958 there were 139,461 private handicraft shops employing 215,000 artisans. The majority of them are owner-operated although many shops have an apprentice as well as the owner-artisan.

Although the goods produced by private enterprise represent only a fraction of the total industrial production of Poland, they play an important part in the economy. Not only do they satisfy the consumer's immediate needs, they also supplement socialized industry. They include items in the absence of which certain important articles produced by large plants become unusable.

Today Poland has four national organizations of private producers covering 1) the building industry, 2) chemical industry, 3) foodstuffs and 4) mills processing flour. The last-mentioned group displayed particular vigor in obtaining restitution to their former owners of thousands of water-powered mills which had been nationalized. The organizations of these private producers keep pressing for further administrative measures to facilitate the growth of private enterprise. Their main task at present is to frustrate the schemes of the bureaucrats who sabotage small industry.

Four members of the Democratic Party in the Polish Parliament speak in the name of private handicraft. They use every opening in debate to defend the interests of the individual small producers against discriminatory taxes, high rents for shops, insufficient allotments of raw materials, difficulties in selling their products to government retail stores and similar inhibitory practices. The prices of their products are higher than those of the nationalized factories, but they compete successfully with big industry in the quality of their products.

A vivid illustration of the discriminatory practices used against

the artisans is given in a story in the popular Warsaw daily, *Zycie Warszawy*, describing a scene from the life of a Warsaw tailor. Episode 1: A customer carrying a roll of material under his arm enters the shop. "How much will you charge me for tailoring a suit?" he asks. "1,200 zlotys," says the tailor. The customer draws out an official price list from his pocket according to which the tailor is entitled to receive only 500 zlotys. Then he shows his badge as a Treasury agent. The tailor is in trouble. Episode 2: The tailor appears at an Internal Revenue office, complaining that he has been assessed an exorbitant tax, based on his having charged 1,200 zlotys for tailoring a suit which is price-fixed at 500 zlotys. The official, smiling ironically, says: "You know very well that you cannot afford to tailor a suit for a mere 500 zlotys." Such scenes, worthy of the pen of Gogol, cannot be found in the literature of Socialist realism.

Since the advent of the Gomulka regime, the income of the population has markedly increased by as much as 18 to 20 per cent according to official statistics. However, these figures are challenged by Polish economists who maintain that only the rural population and the miners have considerably increased their incomes—the miners owing to their strategic position in the country's economy and the peasants because of the new agricultural policy of the regime.

Unlike previous years, when economic planning was carried out in the secrecy of the Party offices, it is now subject to close public scrutiny. This change is reflected in the new status of the Polish Parliament, or Sejm. Before 1956 the Sejm had been a mere rubber stamp. Its newly built palace stood empty most of the year. A wing reserved as living quarters for out of town deputies was used only a few days each month when the deputies came to Warsaw to pick up their monthly checks and enjoy the amenities of the Hotel Sejmowy. Today the palace of the Sejm in Wiejska Street is the scene of intense activity. Parliamentary committees work constantly preparing draft bills and conducting hearings. As a result of the Sejm's new prestige, administrative measures are no longer carried out without first being at least aired in the Sejm. The importance which Gomulka himself attaches to the revital-

ized Sejm is evidenced in the appointment of Zenon Kliszko, his closest friend and one of the most influential leaders of the Polish Communist Party, to the Vice Presidency of the Parliament.

While voices are sometimes raised in heated parliamentary debate, this does not signify that Parliament plays a leading role in legislation. The Sejm "only slightly disturbs the normal functioning of the ruling political machinery" as an influential member of parliament recently put it in a public statement. The Polish Parliament does not rule the country but rather tries to give judicial shape to the decisions made by those who wield the real political power.

The most immediate effect of the parliamentary revival is that the regime can no longer successfully practice the technique of overwhelming the people with grandiloquent statistics on the staggering "achievements" of long-range planning and the high production quotas which were always exceeded. In short, what the Poles used to call the "lunar economy" can no longer work as smoothly as before. Economic life in Poland has become a matter of public concern. Its negative aspects can no longer be kept a secret. Inadequacies and abuses are pitilessly revealed, particularly since the courts have regained some judicial independence. Thanks to the trials, the Polish public is now being informed fully about the crimes which continued to be perpetrated for years by the managers of government business enterprises.

The commonest crimes are embezzlement and plain thievery, which constantly plague the Polish economy. There are all kinds of thievery. Stealing of goods from the factories is a daily occurrence. Endless ingenuity goes into cheating the government. For example, the government cafes work on a deficit while private cafes make fabulous profits. The employes of government cafes have resorted to a very clever trick. A cafe which obtains ten kilos of coffee for a certain period must account for it according to the approximate number of cups derived per kilo. The employees, however, buy coffee on the free market, dispense it in the cafe and pocket the receipts. In effect they are partners of the government without having to meet any part of the overhead in running the cafe.

Theft is an economic necessity in Poland because the wage

scale is still miserable. The average salary of a worker, after the recent wage rise, is between 1,000 and 1,200 zlotys a month. Comparably, the price of a pair of shoes is 300–400 zlotys, and a cheap suit of clothes costs 1,500–2,000 zlotys. To make ends meet, workers work two shifts and take on additional Sunday jobs because the normal work week in Poland is still a full six days.

In Socialist Poland there are tens of thousands of agricultural laborers who live from hand to mouth, who belong to no union, whose work is not subject to any regulation and who are at the complete mercy of their bosses. Officially, their number is estimated at between 50,000 and 60,000, but it is believed that actually there are many more such wretches, for farmers usually do not report the full number of farmhands they employ. The descriptions in the press of their living conditions remind us of the pages devoted by Marx to the English textile workers of the 1850's.

In his report to the Twelfth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party held in Warsaw in October 1958, Gomulka took a moderately optimistic view of the economic achievements of his regime. For the first time since his return to power, he gave priority to the discussion of economic issues. This new emphasis has been interpreted as a sign of the consolidation of his own position in the Party and the increased strength of the regime. Gomulka stressed the stabilization of the budget, the decrease of absenteeism in the factories, the gradual increase in salaries and pensions and the expanded supply of products available to the consumer. For the year 1958, Gomulka said there had been a 4 per cent increase in the income of the peasants and a 10 per cent increase in the production of socialized industry. Heavy industry had made an 8 per cent advance while the production of consumer goods has increased by 12 per cent.

In contrast to the rosy predictions for the future made in the official statements of the pre-October regimes, the Gomulka regime shows great caution in its reporting on economic progress and improvements in living conditions. In his concluding speech at the Third Congress Gomulka significantly omitted stressing Poland's economic achievements since October. Instead, he emphasized the progress made during the entire 14 years of the

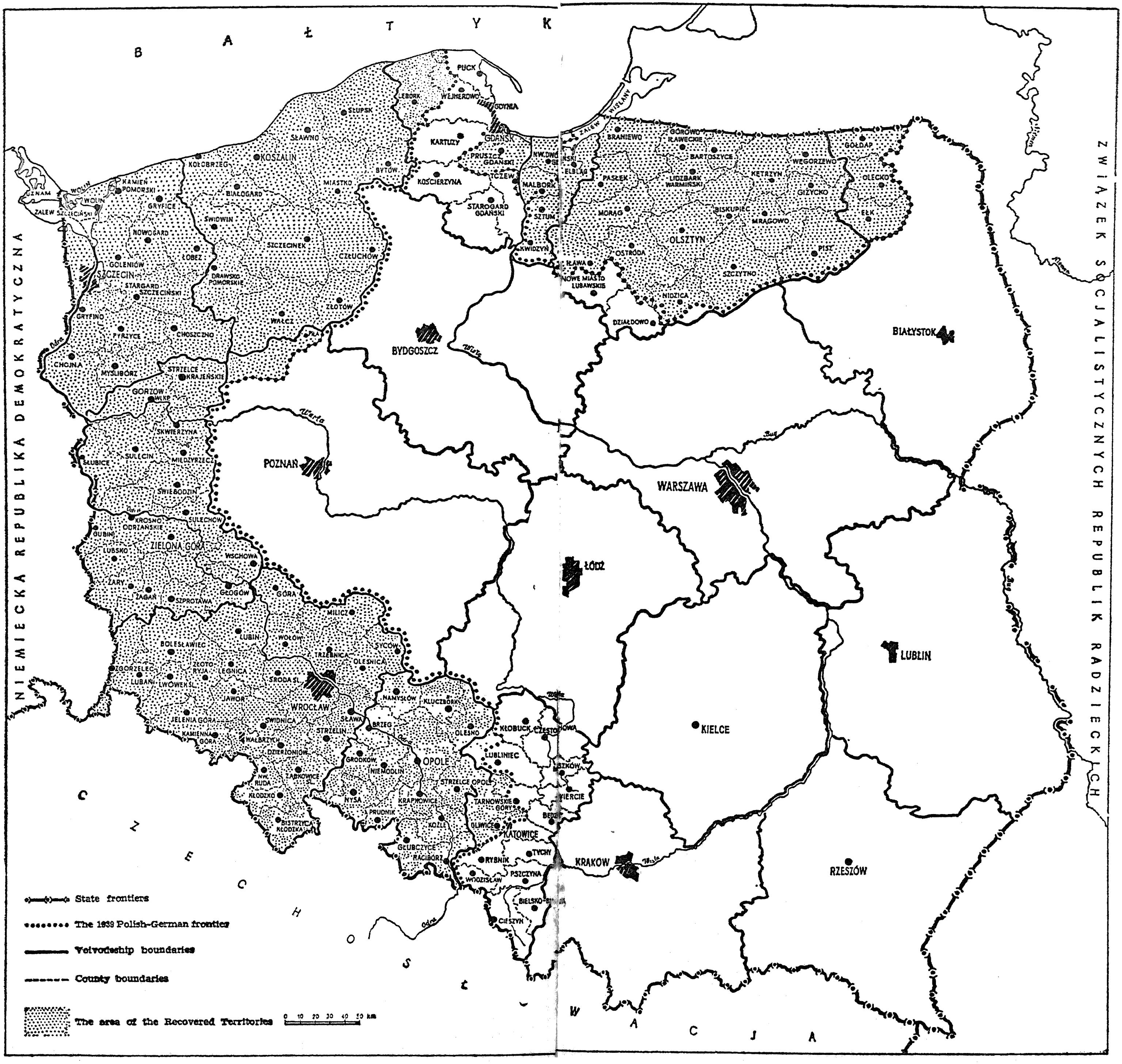
Communist regime, quoting official statistics to show that current industrial production is five times as great as in 1938 and that agricultural production is 40 per cent greater. As for the future, Gomulka emphasized that the seven-year economic plan, ending in 1965, aims to raise industrial production 80 per cent and agricultural production 30 per cent. The expected rise in living standards is reflected in the program for broadening social security, increasing salaries and incomes by 30 to 35 per cent and providing millions of new dwelling units in cities and villages.

Since the October revolt, the Polish economy has made slow but steady progress. Planning has become more modest in its goals and far more realistic. Yet, the Polish economy still labors under severe handicaps, most of them inherited from a feudal past. Just as the nation was beginning to emerge into the twentieth century, its progress was rolled back by the devastation of war and the rigidity of an economy imposed by Moscow.

Part Three

Between East and West

MAP
OF POLAND


B A Ł T Y K
NIEMIECKA REPUBLIKA DEMOKRATYCZNA
ZWIĄZEK SOCJALISTYCZNYCH REPUBLIK RADZIECKICH
C Z E C H O S Ł O W A C J A
SZCZECIN
KOSZALIN
GDAŃSK
OLSZTYN
BYDGOSZCZ
BIAŁYSTOK
POZNAŃ
WARSZAWA
ŁÓDŹ
ZIELONA GÓRA
WROCŁAW
OPOLE
KATOWICE
KIELCE
LUBLIN
KRAKÓW
RZESZÓW
State frontiers
The 1939 Polish-German frontier
Voivodeship boundaries
County boundaries
The area of the Recovered Territories
0 10 20 30 40 50 km

13

THE RECOVERED TERRITORIES

WHENEVER THE QUESTION of Germany's place in the international community comes up for discussion, Poland suffers an acute case of the jitters, because the specter of the German claim on the Recovered Territories harrows the emotions of every Pole. It was under the provisions of the Potsdam Agreement that Poland regained from Germany the western lands as compensation for the eastern areas which were stripped from Poland by Soviet annexation. The Recovered Territories comprise parts of the former East German provinces of Silesia and Pomerania.

At the opening of the Third Party Congress in Warsaw on March 10, 1959, Gomulka insisted on the inviolability of Poland's present frontier with Germany. He acknowledged Poland's concern with the conclusion of a peace treaty which would ratify the present Polish-German frontier and commented grimly on the fact that while Communist East Germany has recognized Poland's right to the former German provinces, the Bonn Republic still asserts a claim to them.

"No one in the world," Gomulka said sarcastically, "could be naive enough to fall for Adenauer's deceptive political tricks of seeking the Polish lamb's consent to being skinned—and without a knife. In essence, that is what Adenauer is aiming at when he talks of regaining the Western Territories by peaceful negotiations. Even Andersen could not concoct such a wildly improbable fairytale, nor does the history of the Catholic Church record so great a miracle."

The staunchness of Gomulka's stand on maintaining Poland's borders along the Oder and Neisse Rivers is the strongest single unifying force in the nation's internal political life. Even the extreme anti-Communist Poles-in-Exile support the regime on this all-important issue, and every shade of political opinion in the nation, including the Catholic Church, is solidly united behind Gomulka's stand.

The very unanimity of Polish opinion on the question of the Recovered Territories has posed a most delicate problem for Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, the primate of the Catholic Church in Poland. He is frequently forced to repudiate Polish attacks on the supposedly pro-German attitude of the Vatican. Although Cardinal Wyszynski made a point of the unusual cordiality extended him at the coronation of Pope John XXIII, he could offer no evidence that the Vatican was any more inclined than the Western powers to support Poland's claim to its postwar borders. The Gomulka regime exploits this issue as one of its most potent political weapons against the Church.

France is the only Western power which officially supports Poland's claim to the Western Territories. This position was first voiced by General Charles de Gaulle in 1944 and was reiterated as recently as 1959 by General de Gaulle as President of the Fifth French Republic.

Only the Soviet Union, among the signatories to the Potsdam Agreement, considers the provisions affecting Poland's Western border as final. The Gomulka regime plays up this evidence of Soviet friendship for Poland as an antidote to the deep-seated anti-Russian and anti-Communist orientation of the Polish people. The Polish Communists reiterate in and out of season that the goodwill of the Soviet Union offers the only solid guarantee that the new boundaries will be permanent. Behind these oft-repeated reassurances, however, lies the anxious recognition that Moscow's rulers are capable of using the new territories as political pawns and that the territorial integrity of Poland may be sacrificed for the sake of winning the German people over to pro-Sovietism. This ever-present fear lies behind the Gomulka regime's ceaseless efforts to gain Western endorsement for the present boundaries.

The intensity of Poland's wooing of the West on this issue is reflected in every Polish publication.

In the preface to "Polish Western Territories," published in 1959 by the Western Institute in Poznan, the official Polish stand is expressed in unequivocal terms: "During the past fourteen years, the integration of these lands with the rest of the country has been completed. Any attempt to undo this achievement would result in catastrophe, and only those reckless enough to risk catastrophe could contemplate it."

The Polish claims to the new territories are based on manifold grounds. Historically and ethnically, the disputed region is an integral part of Poland, the Poles argue. Economically, the new territories are indispensable to Poland's industrial and agricultural viability. The nation's historical claim extends back a millennium or more to the days of the first Polish kings who made Poznan their capital and expanded the territory of the Polish state in the west to the line of its present borders.

King Boleslaw, the Wry-Mouthed, gained access to the sea for Poland in 1122 when a series of expeditions won all of Pomerania for Poland and united it with the estuary of the Odra River and the Szczecin harbor. When Boleslaw died, however, the Polish princes who ruled Pomerania and Silesia succumbed to the pressure of German expansionism.

Polish historians deplore the nation's failure to complete the liquidation of the Teutonic Order of Knights after their utter defeat at the hands of King Wladyslaw Jagiello at the Battle of Grunwald in 1410. For more than five hundred years, this blunder has haunted Poland. It enabled the monastic, aggressive state of the Teutonic Knights to transform itself after its defeat into a secular state, to establish the Hohenzollern throne in Prussia and to create the kernel of the militaristic Germany which, in alliance with Russia and Austria, brought about the partition of Poland and deprived the Polish nation of its independence for over 150 years.

After the First World War, the Western border defined for Poland by the Versailles Treaty provided a source of new conflict with Germany. Poland was given a small portion of Upper Silesia and limited access to the sea. Poland's narrow corridor to the sea

was hemmed in by the German territories, and the "free city" of Gdansk, which fell under the control of German nationalists, became the starting point for Hitler's crushing attack on Poland.

After the German surrender to the Allies in 1945, the eastern and western borders of Poland were radically revised. Under the Yalta agreement of 1945, the nation's eastern boundary was rolled back to the so-called Curzon Line, leaving the immense stretch of Polish territory to be gobbled up by the Soviet Union. To compensate for shrinking Poland's eastern domain, the Yalta pact signatories—the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union—agreed that the nation was entitled to acquire vast new territories on its northern and western frontiers.

The Potsdam Agreement of August 21, 1945, set the seal on the Yalta concessions to Poland by declaring that the former German territories east of the Odra-Neisse Rivers, together with the former free city of Gdansk, were to be placed under Polish administration. The agreement further specified that this agreement was to continue until the demarcation of Poland's western borders was determined at the peace settlement with Germany.

According to the Polish view, the Potsdam decision itself settled the Polish-German territorial question; the peace treaty could only sanction it by formally delineating the line of demarcation between the two nations. The Polish government gave substance to its interpretation of the Potsdam decision in a decree entitled "Of the Administration of the Recovered Territories" in which these regions were declared to be an integral part of the nation. A bilateral agreement between Poland and the Soviet Union had established the eastern boundary line between them, and Poland was satisfied to settle the western border question by a similar agreement with her East German neighbor. The agreement was signed by both governments at Frankfurt-an-der-Oder on January 27, 1951.

The West German government, on the other hand, rejects the Polish interpretation of the Potsdam Agreement. Bonn considers the agreement only a temporary expedient, without the legal basis of a permanent treaty. In November 1951, a Bonn ordinance was issued requiring that the Recovered Territories be referred to as the "German Eastern Lands under Polish Administration." This

was followed in 1956 by a protest to all the Western nations, especially the members of NATO, because some 75 geographic atlases published in these countries, except one in Switzerland, showed the Recovered Territories as part of Poland. For the Poles, Bonn's intransigence, coupled with the German nationalist drive to regain pre-war territories, is a source of constant irritation and anxiety.

Besides asserting its legal and historical right to the Recovered Territories, Poland advances the additional argument that the disputed lands are populated entirely by Poles. Polish effort and sacrifice have reclaimed them from devastation, the argument goes, and now their economic viability, and indeed the economic viability of all Poland, depends on the maintenance of the existing status quo of the Territories.

Both Silesia and Pomerania had been converted into vast slave labor camps by the Nazis during World War II. Millions of Poles marked by the letter "P" which designated them as members of an "inferior race" perished there. Poland contends that the survivors of these martyrs were the first to begin the reclamation of the devastated provinces. On the eve of the Allied victory, it is estimated that 5,000,000 Germans fled from Silesia and Pomerania fearing more the vengeance of Polish civilians than the might of the advancing Soviet divisions.

The first official post-war census of the provinces, in February 1946, showed that the German population had dwindled from more than 7,000,000 at the outbreak of the war to 2,036,400. When the repatriation provisions of the Potsdam Agreement had been fulfilled by 1948, no more than 50,000 Germans remained, and the majority of these have voluntarily gone back to Germany in the past ten years. According to Polish sources, only 6,000 Germans still remain.

Virtually every one of the 40,000 square miles of the Recovered Territories had been despoiled and depopulated during World War II. The rehabilitation of the region required resettlement on an immense scale. More than 4,500,000 new settlers were brought in between 1945 and 1948, bringing the total population to 5,500,-000 as compared with the pre-war population of 8,000,000. One third of the new settlers were repatriates from the eastern lands,

annexed from Poland by the Soviet Union, and the rest were migrants from Poland's central provinces. A special ministry for the Recovered Territories, established in November 1945 with Gomulka as its chief, directed the gigantic resettlement program. A new wave of migrants during 1957-1959, mainly repatriates from the Soviet Union, swelled the total population to more than 7,000,000, giving the Recovered Territories one fourth of Poland's entire population.

The natural increase of population in the Recovered Territories is extremely high because most of the new settlers are young people. In the past ten years natural increase has accounted for 30 per cent of the present population, which now includes close to 2,000,000 children under the age of ten, a great majority of whom were born in their present homes. As a result, fully one fourth of the Polish population of the Recovered Territories was born there during the past ten years. The political significance of this fact would be difficult to overlook.

Before the Recovered Territories were integrated into Poland, they were part of the agricultural hinterland of industrial Germany. In German hands and by virtue of substantial capital investment, the farms of the Recovered Territories had a high level of productivity although their natural conditions are greatly inferior to the farm land in other parts of Poland. Their productivity today is still not as great as it had been under the Germans because the devastation of war and ruinous effect of collectivization during the Stalinist era have not altogether been erased. Nevertheless, they play a vitally important role in providing food for Poland. The forests of the Recovered Territories are especially vital to Poland. Since the rich central forests of Poland were despoiled during the Nazi occupation, the Recovered Territories have become the nation's prime timber resource.

Important as the Recovered Territories are to Poland's agricultural life, their peacetime transformation into an industrial center has also made giant strides. One fourth of the nation's industrial products are manufactured or processed there today. Ninety per cent of the nation's freight cars are manufactured there, and the region also accounts for a great deal of heavy machinery, building materials, electrical supplies, chemicals and

fertilizers. Equally important to Poland are the consumer goods produced in the Recovered Territories, including 65 per cent of the nation's radios, 34 per cent of her furniture and 44 per cent of her shoes. The national economy has been similarly enriched by a new deep-sea fishing industry, a growing merchant marine and by the shipbuilding facilities of Szczecin.

A great network of schools, universities and scientific institutions has been established in the Recovered Territories, and a generation of writers and artists has sprung up to serve the theaters, newspapers and publishing houses founded by Poles. Nevertheless, the area is still relatively sparsely settled, and Poland regards it as a providential reserve for a dynamically expanding population, which is rising by natural increase at the rate of 19.4 per thousand per year, in contrast to the natural increase rate in both Germanies of less than 5 per thousand.

Polish uneasiness about its Recovered Territories is implicit in every independent diplomatic move the Poles are able to make within the framework of the Soviet bloc. On February 14, 1958, Poland advanced its Rapacki Plan, named for the Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki. The Rapacki Plan seeks to establish a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe comprising Poland, Czechoslovakia and the East and West German Republics. In presenting the Plan to the Four Great Powers and to the other nations directly concerned, Poland was clearly aiming at a possible rapprochement with West Germany which might conceivably curb the growing vigor of its claims on Silesia and Pomerania.

The problem of the Recovered Territories also lies at the core of Poland's support of Soviet opposition to German reunification. Polish memory needs no prodding to recall that World War II began with the German attack on Danzig, and Polish statesmen need no reminder of the might a reunified Germany could apply to regaining its lost provinces. The nightmare possibility becomes even more frightening with the realization that such a drive by a united Germany might well enlist the support of the West if unification could be won under the influence of Bonn, or of the Soviets if East Germany were to become dominant. Even though the Poles share the Soviet position against the unification of Ger-

many, they have high hopes that the Rapacki Plan may open the door to improved relations with West Germany.

Meanwhile, Polish diplomats discreetly persist in their efforts to convey to the West that the problem of the Recovered Territories is purely a Polish national issue and is not to be regarded as an element of Soviet bloc statecraft. In fact, the Poles contend, the Western reluctance to recognize as permanent the status of the Recovered Territories plays into the hands of the Soviets, because they can use the threat of withdrawing their support of the Potsdam Agreement as a counter to any Polish move toward greater independence from Moscow.

14

THE SOVIET "CORRIDOR" IN POLAND

I TRAVELED to Wroclaw, the capital of the new Recovered Territories, on the Brest-Legnica railroad line, sarcastically called the Soviet Corridor. The line runs from the formerly Polish town of Brzesc (Brest), the present border of Soviet Russia, to the new Polish border with East Germany at the Oder and Neisse Rivers. The phrase Soviet Corridor is a tragic reminder of the Danzig Corridor which the Versailles peace treaty set up to serve Germany as a territorial link with its East Prussian province. Actually, there is no such thing as a Soviet Corridor; but the trains running on the Brest-Legnica line are a constant reminder to Poland of the Soviet armed fist clenched over the country. One trip on this line affords a visitor the best opportunity to observe the Polish population's attitude toward the representatives of the "friendly" Soviet superpower in Poland.

The moment the Brest-Legnica express arrived at the Warsaw railroad station, it was besieged by a mob of waiting passengers. They flung their baggage into the rear cars through the windows

and in the flash of an eye had occupied not only every seat but every inch of space in the corridors, platforms and even toilets as well. Yet at the same time, Soviet officers were sitting comfortably with their families in the front of the train, looking through the windows at the struggling crowd of Poles outside.

I saw no sign to indicate that the cars in the front of the train were reserved for Soviet military personnel. Apparently that was self-evident to the Poles; I didn't notice a single one of them trying to enter the almost empty front cars. Pretending innocence, I showed the conductor my first class ticket and asked for a seat.

Taken aback, the conductor pointed to the chaos in the overcrowded cars, where the people had taken all the seats regardless of the class of accommodations their tickets called for. It was obviously impossible even to try to check their tickets. I remarked that the cars up front, near the locomotive, were practically empty and asked if he could find me a seat there. The agitated conductor suddenly burst into laughter and said:

"What's the matter with you? Where did you drop down from —heaven?"

Continuing the pretense of innocence, I asked why he couldn't seat me with the Soviet officers. At this the conductor lost his patience.

"Are you crazy?" he yelled.

When I showed him my American passport, he immediately became polite. Apologizing, he bent over and whispered in my ear that that part of the train was reserved exclusively for Soviet citizens, and passengers of other nationalities were not permitted there. The conductor took one of my suitcases and led me to a special section of the train set aside for train personnel. There he gave me a seat.

Immediately, a to-do began in the corridor; the conductor had discriminated in my favor, and the other passengers resented it. Since there were a few other empty seats in the train personnel section, a Polish officer accompanied by his wife and a civilian who was the manager of a building cooperative in Siedlce and on an official mission to Wroclaw took seats near me.

Despite the presence of my official neighbors, the railroad workers in the car answered my questions about their salary and

work conditions under the present regime without hesitation. By their account, the average railroad worker made from 1,000 to 1,200 zlotys a month. The engineers got 2,000 zlotys and in addition bonuses for keeping to the schedule as well as for saving coal. The railroad workers did not mind admitting that the coal bonus had been introduced to prevent the wholesale theft of coal. The railroad workers also told me that they received benefits in the form of medical aid, schools, vacations, housing that was practically free and coal to heat their homes.

The conductors told me that third class accommodations were going to be dropped soon, because the railroad could not handle the traffic. This, despite the fact that Poland produces excellent locomotives and modern railroad cars. Most of the production is exported to the Communist bloc countries, primarily Soviet Russia. Thus, they told me, you could see only a few of the new Polish locomotives in Poland itself.

"This train has an American locomotive, a Truman," interjected a veteran conductor. ("Trumans" are what they still call the big American locomotives Poland received from the United States immediately after the war when Harry S. Truman was President.)

Unlike Soviet Russia, Poland does not require permits of persons traveling within the country. There is a growing interest in migration, particularly among the peasants. Most of the movement within the country is toward the new territories which offer more scope for business ventures than any other part of Poland. That was why the train was so crowded.

When I asked why, despite the overcrowding, the Soviet passengers were given such extraordinary privileges, the cooperative manager spoke up for the first time.

"They liberated us, so we can suffer a little."

I was not quite certain from his tone whether to take this statement literally or ironically. Later, when I got to talking to him, I found the cooperative manager to be an intelligent man and none too fond of Moscow, despite the fact that he was loyal to the present Communist regime. He even ventured a few heretical observations about the Soviet Union.

"Would the Soviet officers refuse to allow women or Polish officers to take the empty seats in their cars?" I wondered out loud.

A conductor replied, "We are under strict orders not to allow any passengers in there." There was a guard stationed in the front of the train, he added, to see to it that no unauthorized person got on. The Polish officer sitting next to me smiled and remarked, "Those cars are extraterritorial!"

My traveling companions talked about the Soviet officers sitting in the front of the train as though they were men from Mars. They did not speak about the Russians with the same hatred they expressed whenever the Germans were mentioned. Rather, they seemed to be resigned to the presence in their country of Soviet officers, representatives of a superpower whose domination was one of those inescapable facts of life. But one of the conductors could not restrain the bitter comment, "They still think of Wroclaw as the German Breslau—that's what they call it." This is a typical attitude among Poles; they sense that Soviet Russia views the new territories that Moscow secured for Poland in recompense for Wilno, Lwow, Brzesc, etc. to be expendible. In the competition for Germany between Soviet Russia and the western democracies, Poles fear that the new rulers of the Kremlin may sacrifice Poland's interests and return most, if not all, of the former German areas to Germany, and that millions of Poles may have to look for new homes.

However, the cooperative manager did not share the railroad conductor's fears on this subject. "The days when we moved millions of people around from one place to another are over," he said to them. I was more surprised by the freedom with which this Communist Party worker talked about the ticklish subject of possible border changes than by his argument itself. He showed no annoyance at all with the railroad workers who were discussing a very delicate question of Polish national policy in front of a stranger from abroad. I had the impression of a completely free exchange of opinions; no one seemed afraid of informers. This impression grew when the cooperative manager candidly answered my questions about the economic situation in the country and the relations between city and village. He admitted openly a lack of coordination in the construction industry. Factories were being built without anyone making provision for housing the factory

workers, who often had to travel many miles to work or live in "worker hotels" which were wretched places.

"Our government's slogan is 'Favor the peasants,'" he said. "That's the right idea, because the peasants make up more than half of our population. We have to favor the peasants because they produce our country's food. So the entire burden of building the country falls on the city workers' shoulders. But that will come to an end."

At this point there was an interruption. One of the railroad workers clutched the lapels of his threadbare uniform and showed it to me, crying angrily, "This is the only suit I have. I have to wear a uniform all the time. Out of what I make I can't afford to buy a suit."

"But you have to admit that things are getting better," the cooperative manager replied. "Wages are slowly going up, and people are getting along."

The railroad worker shut up, but he did not look very convinced to me. One of the other conductors laughed. "We make enough for bread," he said, "and the rest of our living we pick up one way or another."

There was general laughter at this sly reference to the theft on the job which is universal in the Polish economy. The conversation was interrupted. Meanwhile, the train had stopped at a number of stations, many passengers had got off, and the corridor was no longer as crowded as it had been. I decided to try to take a little walk, but when I got away from the door I found that the corridor was still jammed. Peasant women were sitting in the aisles on their baggage. A few of them proved to be returning from visits to relatives in the eastern areas, now part of the Soviet Union. I asked them where they were coming from, and several of the peasant women replied in unison, "We've been out of the country." That sounded odd to me, particularly when some of them said they were coming back from Kobryn, Osmiany, Drohiczyn. These were all villages that had recently been part of Poland.

Our train stopped a long time at Poznan, where in June 1956 the historic strike had been called at Cegielski locomotive factory. It was late at night by the time we arrived at this capital of Pomerania. The railroad station was brilliantly illuminated, and

I went into the station restaurant. As I opened the door I heard the sound of hoarse voices and harsh Polish curses. Young men and women were sitting around the tables drinking vodka, kissing and cursing.

When I asked the restaurant manager who these happy youngsters were, he told me they were from a youth conference that had just been held in Poznan. One of the solemn resolutions the conference had passed, he added mockingly, was a strong condemnation of alcoholism. The Communist Party was on a rampage against heavy drinking in Poland.

We arrived in Wroclaw late at night. The huge factory smoke stacks belched reddish-green flames that could be seen for miles around this center of industry in Lower Silesia.

15

THE REPATRIATES

As I ENTERED the courtyard of the old Jewish Community House in Wroclaw, I was taken aback at the sight of the people pressing through the corridor to the mess hall. This was the first large contingent of Jews newly returned from Soviet Russia that I had encountered in Poland. They still bore the marks of their long years in Soviet Siberia where most of them had spent from ten to fifteen years toiling in the gold mines, stone quarries and tundras of Baikal.

The men were still wearing greasy quilted jackets and felt boots; the women were tricked out in coats converted from green military woolens. Some of the younger men had been crippled during the war and rested on crutches. Almost all of them showed signs of frostbite on the ears and fingers. They had just arrived a few days before and were sleeping temporarily in the Community House, waiting to be assigned to private quarters. Pressed together

in the crowd, the men and women, most of whom were middle-aged, all seemed to merge into one wrinkled, prematurely aged face. Even the younger women, holding small children by the hand, looked emaciated and careless of their appearance; many were toothless. It was many years since I had last seen people in so lamentable a state. At first I found it hard to speak to them; the tears literally clogged my throat, as I stood face to face with this mass of tired, homeless people. The small dining rooms in the public kitchen were packed. People sat six to eight at tables meant for four.

Most of the repatriates turned out to have worked in labor and penal camps in Soviet Russia. Some, however, had suffered relatively little compared with the Jews who had survived the war in Poland. But, regardless of their experiences in Soviet Russia, all of the repatriates to whom I managed to talk in the community kitchen told me they had left Russia with the intention of migrating to Israel. Poland was just a way station. The thought of remaining in Poland never occurred to them despite the unexpected friendliness that Polish officials had shown the newcomers both in Russia when they registered for repatriation and in the assembly points on the Polish side of the border. The future for Jews in Poland was too bleak, particularly for those who had been out of the country for ten years or more, whose homes, relatives, livelihood were all gone.

How had they been treated in Soviet Russia? The repatriates told me about their experiences in Soviet work camps, the senseless accusations they had faced, the trials they had been subjected to. One of the repatriates told me a typical story, illustrating the Soviet Communist mentality. This man, Chaim Feldgaier from Lodz, was sent to prison for ten years when he was on the verge of being returned to Poland. It was in 1947, and he was in Moscow. A Soviet official asked him casually why he wanted to leave Russia. Feldgaier replied imprudently that he hoped he would be better off in Poland. He was immediately arrested, sentenced to ten years at hard labor and sent to a slave labor camp.

"The judge who sentenced me," Feldgaier said, "explained that my crime fell under paragraph 58. The judge smiled. It had to do with 'counterrevolutionary' activity, he explained."

But, the repatriates told me sarcastically, this was one case where the Jews were not the only ones to be discriminated against. One repatriate estimated that over 50 per cent of the Russian population had been in prison or labor camps at one time or another. As a matter of fact, Soviet citizens who returned from deportation were not considered criminals; they were treated respectfully. The repatriates told me it was common practice for all people who said they had just returned from work camps to go to the head of the line at the state stores and railroad stations.

After supper, the repatriates thronged the courtyard outside the Community House, milling about and gesticulating. In 1945 this same courtyard had been the assembly point for Jews liberated from the Nazi slave camps in the surrounding area. From here they were dispatched to the empty cities and towns of Lower Silesia, whose German residents had fled with the retreating Nazi army. These Jews, whom the Nazis had dragged out of their homes in every part of Poland and thrown into the slave camps of Lower Silesia, now, after the liberation, became the advance guard of Polish civilians in the new territories allotted to Poland. The Jews who had survived the concentration camps in Neukirchen, Blechhammer, Grossrosen, Hermannsdorf, Sportsschule (Psie-Pole) went off to the factories and coal mines in their striped convict uniforms. They saved the Silesian industry from the special Nazi sabotage battalions that had been left behind to blow up the installations. In just retribution the tragic remnants of Polish Jewry took over the homes of the fleeing Germans who had grown fat during the years of Nazi occupation on Jewish property, goods and the proceeds of Jewish slave labor.

June 1945 saw the formation of the first Jewish community council in Lower Silesia. The council immediately began to organize the economic, cultural and religious life of the tens of thousands of Jews in the new Polish territories. In 1946 the first stream of Polish Jewish repatriates from Soviet Russia passed through the Jewish community buildings. In the years 1957–1959 the buildings were again an assembly point—this time for the Polish Jews repatriated from Soviet Russia by agreement with the new Gomulka regime.

Although the Polish authorities were friendly to the Jewish re-

patriates, the Jews knew how precarious their situation was. The shrunken Jewish community, which had dwindled from over three million in pre-war Poland to a tragic remnant of only thirty or forty thousand, has no future. There is no real hope of rebuilding Jewish life on the ashes of their martyred people. The fate of the repatriates was sealed; they would always be pawns in the struggle between the Communist regime and the Catholic Church. They would remain scapegoats however small their number. Candid Poles on both sides of the ideological front line recognize the Jewish dilemma. The task of erasing Polish anti-Semitism, so easily stirred by influences from within and without, would not be an easy one. The Gomulka regime decided to give the Jews a choice. They could leave Poland or stay and take their chances. The repatriates stayed only long enough to catch their breaths, and then the majority went on to Israel.

16

ATOMIC SPECTRE OVER LEGNICA

THE OLD LOWER SILESIAN CITY of Legnica is the gateway to the invisible Soviet Corridor in Poland that extends from Communist East Germany to Brzesc (Brest). I made no attempt to determine the size of the Soviet army in Legnica. There are things in Poland people prefer not to talk about though they are not so secret that estimates do not exist. The official version has it that the Soviet divisions are on Polish soil as part of the Warsaw Pact forces—i.e., as a kind of Communist counterpoise to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) armies of Western Europe. This version is for outside consumption. Inside Poland, the argument focuses on the Soviet army's presence as the "guardian of the new Polish territories" against the renascent nationalist forces in West

Germany clamoring for the return of the former German territories in Pomerania and Lower Silesia.

Whenever, speaking to a Pole, I mentioned Legnica, he would grimace at the thought of his country's humiliation. For the dreadful shadow of Soviet intervention extends from Legnica all over Poland; the moment the Kremlin thinks it necessary, Poles are convinced, they will dispatch the Soviet army from its Legnica base into the heart of Poland. That is exactly what happened in October 1956 when Nikita Khrushchev flew to Warsaw to keep Wladyslaw Gomulka from assuming power. Marshal Konev, the commander of the Warsaw Pact armies, dispatched Soviet armored divisions from Legnica. Under cover of darkness they streamed down the modern highway running through Wroclaw, Katowice and Lodz, not stopping until they had reached the gates of Warsaw.

Since Poland is not Soviet Russia, you do not need a special permit to get into Legnica. I drove down the superhighway from Wroclaw to Legnica for several hours without meeting a single automobile. Built under the Nazis by slave labor from the nearby work camps, it resembles a new American turnpike. These Nazi work camps, incidentally, though smaller and less well known than the famous extermination camps at Oswiecim, Treblinka and Majdanek, had their efficient gas chambers and crematoria, too. The crematoria chimneys, deliberately not razed to serve as a reminder of the Nazi industry of murder, are the sole memorials to the tens of thousands of Jews whose bodies went up in smoke through these chimneys. But the highway runs alongside graveyards for Soviet soldiers who fell taking the German positions in fortified Lower Silesia.

It was early Sunday afternoon when I arrived in Legnica. As I came into the main street of the city, I heard a bass voice blaring a Russian song out of loudspeakers on the top of the large, red-bricked State Theater Building. Soviet soldiers and officers in dress uniform were standing on the broad steps going up to the theater. Many of them were holding small children in their arms; their wives stood nearby wearing colored head kerchiefs and leather jackets. The walls of the surrounding buildings were plastered with billboards in both Russian and Polish inviting the

people of Legnica to attend the movie festival in honor of the fortieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. They were showing *Lenin in October*. There were huge red banners swinging across the entire street with a sign in gigantic letters reading: POLISH-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP MONTH.

Usually the state theater is reserved for the exclusive use of Soviet armed and civilian personnel. For Polish-Soviet Friendship Month the curb had been relaxed, and I met a few Poles inside the theater. The impression I got from talking to the Poles was that Friendship Month was only a slogan as far as they were concerned.

The state theater was pretty much deserted by the Poles. On the other hand, there were large crowds milling around the three other movie houses in town, *The Baltic*, *The Piast* and *The Railroad Worker*. The coming attractions at these three movie houses, published a month in advance, offered the best insight into the interests of the population of this unusual city. *The Baltic* was currently playing the Israeli Film *Hill 24 Does Not Answer*. Coming attractions consisted of an English comedy, an American Western and the Italian movie of social significance, *Bitter Rice*. The programs at the other two movie houses were much the same, mostly British, American, Italian and French films. Here and there you came across a Polish movie advertised or one from Communist East Germany but not a sign of a single Soviet film coming in any of the Polish movie houses in Legnica.

I went to see the Israeli film at *The Baltic* and found myself sitting next to several Jewish repatriates from the Soviet Union. We left *The Baltic* together. Our number grew as we walked to Nowy Swiat Plaza. There we came upon a large group of Jews standing outside and arguing with three Russian soldiers. I asked my companions with amazement whether that was not a risky thing for the repatriates to be doing. The answer I got was that it had become a very common sight.

The repatriates went on to tell me that from their conversations with the Soviet soldiers it would seem the young Russians still have no idea of what happened during the Stalin period. The first question a Soviet soldier generally asks a repatriate is why he has left "big rich Soviet Russia" for "poor little Poland." When

the Soviet soldiers find out the repatriate they are talking to is an ex-Red Army man, they're apt to become enraged. One Soviet soldier yelled "Traitor!" when he heard this.

On my visit to Legnica I discovered a complicated international situation in this city, practically unknown outside Poland. Official statistics give Legnica a population of 53,000. But you get the impression of a much larger city from the tempo and the amount of movement in the street. The reason for the discrepancy is that the thousands of Soviet soldiers and civilian personnel one passes walking through the city are not included in the official population figures. The Russians lead a separate life of their own in their barracks and special quarters, which are extraterritorial and outside of Polish control.

The Soviet base, into which Legnica Polish residents cannot enter, is a kind of city by itself with its own stores, hospitals and so forth. Soviet soldiers need a special pass to go off the base and into the city. Still, you see hundreds of Soviet soldiers in Legnica streets every day. They are the best customers in the coffee houses and shops, of which there are a particularly large number in Legnica. The Soviet soldiers pay for what they buy with brand-new Polish zlotys; the joke is that they have a special Soviet press for zlotys.

Legnica is an international city. Jews represent the largest minority group; there are 10,000 of them, mostly repatriates from Soviet Russia. You can also hear Greek and Spanish spoken on the streets of Legnica, in addition to Polish, Russian and Yiddish. The next largest minority group after the Jews are the former Greek partisans who fought under the Communist General Marcos Vafiades. In 1950, when the Marcos battalions were defeated, Poland granted asylum to some 2,000 Greek Communists; most of them settled in Legnica. It is rumored that the General himself is in Legnica—he is under sentence of death by the Greek government—official Polish circles deny it. The Spaniards in Legnica are veterans of the Spanish Civil War who fled to Soviet Russia when the Republic fell. These former Spanish Communist heroes suffered terribly in the Socialist Fatherland. In 1944, they took the opportunity to migrate to Poland with the newly created Polish

Communist army whose organizers included many high-ranking officers from the Spanish International Brigade. The Polish officers allowed their sorely tried Spanish comrades to accompany them to Poland. After the war they settled in Legnica.

Legnica is a sensitive point in Communist military planning. It is not only the Soviet army's chief base in Poland; this small city in Lower Silesia is also considered the future strategic center for the atomic armament of all the Communist countries in the Warsaw Pact. Walking through Legnica one day, I was thinking about this atomic specter looming over the city when I was suddenly wrenched back home to the United States and the reality of the East-West atomic age struggle; for, as I left the historic quarter of the old city, I came to a street with a large, new sign that read: *Ethel and Julius Rosenberg Street.*

17

FEAR OF THE FUTURE

The cities and towns of Lower Silesia are full of monuments attesting to the Polish history of that area. All these places have resumed their old Polish names. But the fear is universal among all elements of the population that Soviet Russia may well change its line again and decide to return the new Polish territories to Germany. This, as I have mentioned, was a suspicion widely held in Lower Silesia and Pomerania. I heard the boldest comment on this scare in the historic town of Brzeg, known as Brieg in German.

Brzeg is the site of the splendid Renaissance castle, with its effigies of the Polish royal Piast dynasty, built by Italian architects during the first half of the sixteenth century. The undamaged bas-relief heads of the early rulers of Poland, principally Mieszko and Boleslaw Chrobry, are still set into the dark façade of the castle.

The castle survived the Thirty Years' War and was besieged by the Napoleonic armies that reached Silesia in 1807. It contains a museum with a number of notable pennants testifying to the fact that Lower Silesia was Polish in the old days. Archaeological excavations have found evidence that this area was inhabited as far back as 10,000 years ago.

Strolling through the museum I knew I was being followed by an elderly man who cast ironic glances at the careful notes I was taking of the pennants. At first I suspected I was being shadowed by the local police in a show of misplaced zeal, but after a while, my supposed shadow introduced himself as a teacher of history. He had a curly, square, graying beard, somewhat like the stone beards of the medieval Polish Piast kings on the façade of the castle. He commented with outspoken bitterness about the government's strenuous propaganda to prove that Lower Silesia was originally Polish.

"Lwow was Polish all right; it didn't need any propaganda," he said. "But when they decided it fitted in their plans, they just took the old Polish monuments, loaded them on big Soviet trucks and deported them from Lwow together with the population."

I immediately hazarded the guess that my informant hailed from Lwow. He admitted it, adding that he was referring to the Raclawice Panorama and the Osolineum Archives that had been transported from Lwow to Wroclaw in 1945. The panorama is a painting of the Battle of Raclawice of 1794 in which the leader of the Polish Uprising, Tadeusz Kosciuszko, defeated the Russian General Tarasov. The huge canvas is the work of two great Polish painters, Jan Styka and Wojciech Kossak. The archives consist of objects of art representing 600 years of Polish culture in Lwow.

"Ah," sighed my companion, "and if the Russians have a mind to, they'll give away Lower Silesia, Pomerania, this whole castle—and the entire Polish population!"

I heard similar expressions of uncertainty over the fate of the new Polish territories in the district capital Opole, where there are the largest number of Polish monuments—Lower Silesia was the cradle of both the Polish state and the Catholic Church a millennium ago. Before evacuating the city, the Nazis managed to destroy about 90 per cent of the buildings in Opole, including

many ancient palaces. Undamaged, however, remained the early medieval Polish church in whose graveyard the four princes of the first royal Piast dynasty lie buried. Granite sarcophagi represent Princes Bolko I, II, III and IV in full knightly armor, with the Polish eagle on their breastplates uncrowned, like the eagle that is the symbol of the present Communist regime in Poland.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the princedom of Opole fell into the hands of the German Hapsburg dynasty. There it remained until the end of World War II when the whole area became part of Poland. Throughout the long period of German domination, the Polish population of the area resisted compulsory Germanization. There was a Polish newspaper in Opole (Oppeln) until World War I, and underground Polish organizations were active even under Hitler.

Completely rebuilt, Opole, for all its Polish street names, still looks like old Prussian Oppeln. The ruined homes and municipal buildings were restored to their original appearance. Its massive, Prussian architecture made the City Council building look like a fort; it is, literally, frightful. Then why in the world did the new Polish masters of Upper Silesia, who put the whole machinery of their propaganda to work to prove that these provinces have been one hundred per cent Polish for centuries, go to such great pains to rebuild their ruined city as an exact replica of the detested original? No one has been able to explain this peculiar phenomenon. The same thing happened in Danzig, where the deliberate revival of the German architectural past was strongly criticized by Polish public opinion.

I took a long walk through Opole, and then went into a coffee house with the odd name of Under the Spider. As I waited to be served, I leafed through a telephone book the waiter had found for me. He asked me not to hold it too long, because it was always in demand. Paper is still expensive in Poland, and you cannot have a telephone book for your own private use even in the special hotels for foreign visitors. The use of the telephone book was the occasion for an unusual and quite unexpected encounter. I did not find any familiar names in the book. The waiter who eventually came over to my table to retrieve the book pointed with embarrassment to a table in a far corner of the coffee house where other

customers were waiting their turn for the precious book. There were several men sitting there with a woman whom I immediately recognized, despite the fact that her thick hair had turned gray since the last time I saw her in Spain. During the Spanish Civil War, when her first husband was a political commissar in the Polish division of the International Brigade, this woman had gone on dangerous missions. Now, remarried to a miner, who had become a high Communist functionary in Lower Silesia, she is active in the mass organizations for coal miners in the Opole area. She lives among the Polish proletariat, most of them coal miners who, although they belong to the Party, attend Sunday services in the old Piast church in Opole.

This woman's career is all the more remarkable in that she came from an intensely Jewish family and surroundings. Her ancestors had been rabbis in Warsaw, and her nearest relatives were active in the Jewish secular nationalist movement in Poland. She and many other young Polish Jews had left their traditional home to join various Socialist movements. Some had gone into the Labor Zionist Young Guard movement of Hashomer Hatzair and then migrated to Palestine. Others had enlisted in the Communist underground movement and ended up in the prison cells of the Pawia Street jail in the heart of the Jewish sector in Warsaw. My friend had been one of the lucky ones who had managed to escape prison by emigrating to France.

This was during the Thirties, when the growth of Nazism and Fascism foreshadowed the first crimes of nascent Stalinism. Then came the Spanish Civil War, which captured the imagination of radical young people all over the world. She and her husband were among the first to join the International Brigade.

Strolling through a park in the smoky Silesian city of Opole, we remembered heated debates of two decades earlier in Madrid when that city was under siege and half in ruins. The Spanish republic was crumbling; it was apparent to nonpartisan observers that the Communist terror was responsible in part for the decline of the anti-Fascist forces. My friend and her husband had been among the Communists who refused to see that the Soviet secret police were using violence to smash those who dared to maintain opinions not sanctioned by Moscow.

Now, when I mentioned the revolutionaries murdered in their innocence, my companion lowered her gray head. Looking at the red autumn leaves crackling under her feet, for the first time in all the years I have known her she gave vent to a feeling of despair. "The proletariat still can't rule," she said cryptically. It was a sentence that expressed a bitter conclusion arrived at after years of experience and deep thought. This had nothing to do with any of the theories that this faction or that faction in the Party held; she was now talking in personal terms. Nor was this in any way a hint that she wished to desert the cause, to desert to the other side of the barricades, as it were. Rather, it was the considered confession of an honest Communist. Now, sitting at the prow of power in a Communist regime, she recognized that the dream she had fought and suffered for all her life had not been realized.

"I am tired of living," she said in a tone of deep resignation as we parted. There was a brief pause. "And that's how my husband feels too," she added. It was not the fact that she was Jewish and originally middle-class that was the reason for her lost illusions; her husband, a Christian of proletarian background, now a high Communist dignitary, also shared her terrible doubts.

Part Four

The Church-State Paradox

18

CRACOW, THE LIVING MUSEUM OF POLAND

THE STREETS of Cracow are a museum memorializing a way of life that has remained unchanged for generations. The years of Communist domination have not succeeded in altering the tempo of life in this old crown city where the bones of Polish kings, knights and poets repose in underground crypts, sealed in bronze and stone sarcophagi. By early evening the narrow, dimly lit streets are empty. The Cracow middle class, its former nobility and conservative university people, live secluded lives in the substantial, dark houses, their windows always heavily curtained. During the day one sees people strolling through the street—an unusual sight for any large city in Poland whose citizens generally are busy from day to night. In the Planty, the unique park that winds for miles through the center of Cracow like a green river, one encounters elderly women wearing black shawls over their gray hair, artists, who have obviously been abroad, wearing French berets and flowing cravats, professors emeritus and veterans of the imperial Austrian army strolling with their engraved, silver-knobbed canes.

Cracow has priests in black frock coats and nuns with starched white hoods spreading above their heads like wings—more of the spiritual personnel than any other city in Poland. The sickeningly sweet smell of incense issuing from the churches and the bells whose pealing vibrates through the air seem to deepen the green patina on the early Gothic and Renaissance buildings and palaces that still stand after the havoc of two World Wars.

The palaces once inhabited by Radziwils, Potockis and Sapie-

has have been turned into people's clubs, and the factories and shops of Cracow have all been nationalized. But in their homes people still maintain the old way of life. Here, too, the social upheaval has brought a harvest of crime although Cracow's newspapers don't pay much attention to it.

The rotary presses that used to print the *Coddzienny Kurjer Ilustrowany*, the newspaper with the biggest circulation in pre-war Poland, now print the *Echo Krakowskie*. The red headlines and make-up are reminiscent of the good old sensational *Kurjer*. But where the *Kurjer* used to feature murders, swindles and romantic liaisons on the front page, the *Echo* beguiles readers with the fascinating captions: "TEN NEW INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES PLANNED"; "592 RATIONALIZATION PROPOSALS IN NOWA HUTA"; "FIVE NEW BREAD STORES OPENED" and the like. The good citizens of Cracow have learned to skip the first two pages of the *Echo*; they begin reading on page 3, where the most fascinating items of life in the sleepy city are printed in small type.

When I was in Cracow, the chief topic of conversation was the Mazurkiewicz case which took up just a couple of lines in the newspaper. Mazurkiewicz used to mingle with the Cracow aristocracy at the same time that he headed a complex smuggling organization for gold, diamonds and dollars. He was a popular figure in the nightclubs where he was often seen in the company of prominent Communists. Highly educated and well dressed, Mazurkiewicz was a great success with the ladies of the impoverished Cracow aristocracy. On the promise of smuggling his clients out of the country, he would extort their last penny and then murder his victims. What was odd about Mazurkiewicz's operations was that the authorities showed not the slightest interest in where he got the money for high-priced automobiles and nightclub life. Whatever he did, Mazurkiewicz made sure not to compromise himself politically, so he was never suspected until his victims' bodies were discovered quite by accident.

II

Official Communist circles in Poland regard Cracow as a "fortress of reaction." Therefore, the city is completely left out of

the vast industrial projects that the Communist regime has undertaken. Nevertheless, Cracow is still the center of scientific research at the old university that has made the city famous. Founded in 1364, by the end of the fourteenth century it had grown into an important European intellectual center. The Cracow University inaugurated a golden age for Polish culture and science. Within its walls worked the first modern astronomer Nicolas Copernicus, the classic poet Jan Kochanowski, and the great moralist and orator Piotr Skarga.

Cracow continues to maintain its high academic and artistic tradition though Warsaw is making every effort to wean the most prominent scholars, artists and writers away. The two cities are bitter competitors. A number of leading Polish writers have moved to Warsaw in recent years, but most of the old-time writers have stayed on in Cracow, along with a group of younger literary people who refuse to leave. They put out a brilliant literary weekly *Zycie Literackie* (*Literary Life*) in which they express the boldest critical opinions. Cracow is also the home of the editors of the liberal Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*, which is considered the mouthpiece of Cardinal Wyszynski. The finest Catholic, as well as non-Catholic, writers are associated with *Tygodnik*.

Piwnica (The Cellar) is a storm center in Cracow's political and literary life. This is a cabaret that is the gathering point for a group of bold young writers and artists. Its small theatre has been putting up a successful fight against censorship. Piwnica's poets and actors improvise biting satires of the regime. The official government press, in turn, characterizes the cabaret as "existentialist," a term of opprobrium in Poland. The authorities refuse to permit the small theatre to tour the country but have not stopped it from playing in Cracow. The cellar is always packed, the audience including visitors from all over the country, particularly nearby Nowa Huta.

So far, the Communist government of Poland has not dared to carry out any open political repressions in Cracow. What it has done is to try to undermine the deep-rooted local traditions through introducing outside influences, the most important being the Communist city of Nowa Huta, built from scratch right outside historic Cracow. Obviously, Nowa Huta was planned as a

counterweight to the "fortress of reaction," but the result has been exactly contrary to the planners' dreams. It is Cracow that is influencing the inhabitants of Nowa Huta, not vice versa. The streetcar lines connecting the two cities bear thousands of young Communists from the rawness of Nowa Huta to feast on the traditional atmosphere of the old Polish crown city.

The name Nowa Huta (New Foundry) refers to the huge steel foundry constructed simultaneously with the city. It is named after Lenin who spent some time in Cracow during the years when he was conspiring in exile against the Czarist government. A marble tablet on the front of an old building in Cracow reads: "Here Vladimir Ilyich Lenin lived during 1913–1914." The tablet was set into the wall in 1945 at the very beginning of the Communist regime in Poland. Four years later, in 1949, Stalin's name was inserted in a second tablet, set up alongside the first on the same building. This one reads: "In this house, from January 10th to January 14th, 1913, a conference of the foreign section of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party was held under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin." The guide who explained the chronology of the two legends to me commented: "This street has the right name for a comedy!" He pointed to the street sign attached to the building and slowly read it aloud: "Ulica Wesola—Merry Street."

Communist propaganda in Poland assiduously built up the legend that the theoretical foundation of the future Soviet state was laid during the period when Lenin was hiding out in Galicia, especially in Cracow, and that Stalin's visit to Cracow was the high point of this period. It used to be compulsory before the October 1956 Revolution to read a book by Valentina Najdus called *Lenin in Poland* for the "ideological courses" at Polish universities. Najdus describes "Lenin's superhuman accomplishments" in Cracow before the Russian Revolution and singles out one man as Lenin's aide—Stalin. These claims were proved to be a lie. *Po Prostu* made a careful investigation of the period Lenin spent in Cracow and proved that, when Lenin moved the foreign section of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party to Cracow in 1912, his closest associates at the time, Kamenev and Zinoviev,

moved with him. They were to be the first victims of Stalin's Moscow trials.

III

The old Jewish quarter of Cracow with its Jewish street names has been emptied of Jews, but a museum is being planned to the memory of the ravaged Jewish community of the old crown city. A laboratory has been set up for planning the reconstruction of the old Cracow synagogues and historic buildings. There, a staff of architects and historians are busy preparing for the rebuilding of houses, only a few, insignificant fragments of which have remained. Cracow as a whole suffered no damage during World War II operations, but the Nazis went to the trouble deliberately of dynamiting the historic synagogues in the city.

I watched Christian architects and art historians carefully analyzing bits of stone ornaments and many-colored wood carvings from the ravaged synagogues. Comparing these fragments against old drawings and archival texts, they noted every detail on the margin of the blueprints—large brown sheets of paper that they unrolled like scrolls. In one of the rooms was an art clinic. Here I found several artists piecing together old Jewish pictures and wood sculptures. It was like an operating room. Injections were administered to the termite-consumed sections of the wood which were then cut away. The color originally used in the frescoes was carefully analyzed.

Dr. Jozef Jamroz, the architect in charge of restoring the Old Synagogue, told me of plans to convert the area where the Jewish quarter formerly stood into a Jewish museum. It is intended as a memorial to the martyrdom not of Polish Jewry alone but of all European Jewry. It is to contain miniature models of synagogues and study houses throughout Europe, including Soviet Russia, both those that still stand and those that have been destroyed. To give a picture of the thousand-year-old Jewish way of life and customs in Poland, everything relating to that history, as well as ethnographic exhibits, are to be assembled in the museum.

The reconstruction of the old Jewish quarter of Cracow also envisions the rebuilding of the medieval ghetto wall, as well as the

red brick one that the Nazis erected five hundred years later, in a reversion to the middle ages. The streets retained their Biblical names throughout the occupation. Thus, one comes across Isaac Street, Jacob Street and Esther Street, as well as streets named after patriotic Polish Jews—e.g., Rabbi Berish Majzels and Berek Joselewicz.

Cracow has been chosen for the reconstruction of its ghetto because it contains the largest number of monuments of Jewish community life. It is perhaps significant that the architects of conservative Cracow should be reconstructing their city's former Jewish quarter in the conviction that Jewish houses of worship are a natural part of the Polish landscape.

Cracow, too, was the scene of another Christian act of brotherhood toward the Jews. This was during the Nazi occupation when a Christian pharmacist Tadeusz Pankiewicz came to feel that the martyrdom of Polish Jewry was part and parcel of general Polish suffering. He took upon himself the task of chronicling the Cracow Ghetto. Tadeusz Pankiewicz remained in the Cracow Ghetto to the very end, keeping daily note of his observations through the pharmacy windows. To his pharmacy came many Jewish notables—writers, artists, scientists—looking for help and relief. Pankiewicz was the only non-Jew the Nazis ever allowed to remain in a ghetto.

The former pharmacist of the Cracow Ghetto no longer owns his pharmacy. They have all been nationalized in Communist Poland, so Tadeusz Pankiewicz is working in a cooperative pharmacy. But all the Jews of Cracow, wherever they may live, buy their drugs where Pankiewicz works out of respect for this remarkable man. There are Jews in many parts of the world who owe their lives to the pharmacist of the Cracow Ghetto. In 1958, Pankiewicz visited Israel at the invitation of Jews from Cracow whom he had helped during the ghetto period.

I stayed up all night reading Tadeusz Pankiewicz's diary *The Ghetto Apothecary*, which has appeared in book form. The next morning, fresh with the impression of his deeply moving descriptions, I visited the ghetto area where many of the ruins have not yet been cleared away. I could still find traces of buildings and places mentioned in the book.

The Christian pharmacy in the Cracow Ghetto was a kind of extraterritorial embassy through which Jews maintained contact with the outside world. They came to the pharmacy to meet friends as well as to buy drugs, to hear the latest news of what was happening on the other side of the ghetto wall and to chat about the rumors that spread like wildfire through the unhappy ghetto. To the pharmacy, too, came Nazis and their agents; Tadeusz Pankiewicz got wind of planned "actions" while the Nazis sat over their liquor.

His Christian friends asked Pankiewicz why the Jews did not resist being led to the slaughter like sheep. He replied that anyone who personally witnessed the Nazi cruelty and cynical use of lies to confound the miserable Jews knew the answer to that question. Pankiewicz wrote:

> "With a few exceptions, I see no sign of cowardice among the Jews. I don't see them begging the Nazis. I don't see them crying. They look death in the eyes with rare calm. They are resigned, but at the same time very proud. The Germans are unable to perceive any expressions of fear, any loss of self-esteem, any pleading for mercy, in these people. This excites the Nazis' wild instincts even further. . . . I have often heard Jews shout: 'Shoot! I'm not afraid to die!' "

Movingly, Pankiewicz describes the number of remarkable persons who used to visit his pharmacy. One frequenter was a diamond cutter; he used to come to the pharmacy to read the *Cracow News,* interpreting every news item as proof of his optimistic predictions of the inevitable defeat of Germany. Then there was a lawyer who took the contrary tack; he argued that the Second World War would have to last as long as the first—at least four years.

Then there was a mathematician who was not in the least interested in the news. He lived in another world altogether, that of mathematical and philosophical problems. One day he came to Pankiewicz with the request that the pharmacist forward an urgent letter to Geneva or to the Swiss Embassy in Berlin. It seems that the mathematician had solved a problem generally considered insoluble. He was convinced that when his work became known to the world, the Germans would let him go and he might even

become rich! Impatiently, the mathematician waited for the reply from abroad. Meanwhile, Pankiewicz contacted a professor of mathematics at Cracow University and arranged a meeting between the two scholars. After studying the new solution, the Cracow University professor proffered the opinion that the ghetto mathematician had achieved only a partial solution of the problem. However, his was one of the best pieces of work in the field, and it should certainly be published in a scientific journal. It was published—but after the war and the Jew did not live to see his *magnum opus* in print. He perished together with thousands of other Jews in the Cracow Ghetto who were deported to the extermination camps.

Respectfully, Pankiewicz speaks of the famous painter Abraham Newman, who had many successful exhibits in Paris and traveled all over the world. Despite his advanced age, Newman kept his vitality throughout the darkest days in the ghetto. He stubbornly persisted in the belief that he would live to see Hitler's defeat and go traveling over the world again.

Newman used to visit Pankiewicz's store accompanied by Mordecai Gebirtig, the popular poet whose song "The Town Is Burning" was a prophetic vision of the ruination of Polish Jewry. The song became a Yiddish classic and is sung all over the world at memorial meetings in honor of the ghetto martyrs. The surviving Jews of Cracow have named their newly organized cultural club after Mordecai Gebirtig.

The Mordecai Gebirtig culture club is situated on Slawkowska Street near the Old Market Place where the Cracow Jews had their shops in the thirteenth century. Only 3,000 remain of the more than 80,000 Jews who were living in Cracow at the outbreak of the war. I passed an evening at the club. There I met the famous Polish Jewish artist Janusz Stern, who was honored with the post of pro-rector of the Cracow Art Academy shortly before the October 1956 Revolution. Stern's nomination aroused great interest in the Polish cultural world, because he had been criticized during the Stalinist period as a surrealist "decadent-bourgeois painter under the corrupt influence of the West." Actually, the official Polish attitude toward Janusz Stern changed long before the Oc-

tober Revolution, at the time when Poland freed itself of the shackles of "socialist realism" that fettered literature and art.

Stern spent the war years in the Lwow Ghetto; when that ghetto was liquidated, he was sent to the extermination camp in Janow. He was one of the 5,000 Jews, the last in the ghetto, who were driven naked to a mass grave and there machine-gunned. Luckily, Stern escaped the bullets. During the night he dug himself out from under the pile of corpses and fled, still naked, to a nearby village where a peasant hid him until the liberation.

After the war, Janusz Stern left Soviet-occupied Lwow, came to Cracow and continued his painting. He painted in the surrealist manner, despite the fact that the Communist esthetes frowned on abstract art. They were particularly annoyed at Stern because in pre-war Poland he had been a member of an avant-garde group of painters who were fellow travelers. But Stern refused to make any compromise, turning down attractive commissions for propaganda paintings to adorn government institutions. All through the years of the Stalin terror, Stern remained on the outside, philosophically waiting for better times.

"What an artist needs most of all," Janusz Stern told me, "is endurance. I waited stubbornly for the hour when freedom of the palette would triumph. Art cannot flourish without full freedom of form and expression. When this freedom is suppressed, art dies."

IV

I spent several days taking in the sights of Cracow in the footsteps of a large group of Soviet tourists. I followed them through nationalized palaces that once belonged to the Polish nobility, churches, art galleries, museums and the royal castle, known as the Wawel—the Pantheon of Poland and the country's most important national museum.

In the palace of the Potockis at the Old Market Place, the Russian tourists listened with astonishment to a Polish guide's recital of the lineage of this noble family. They were especially taken aback to hear that many of the Potockis were still living in contemporary Poland and that a few of them were even officials in the Communist government.

The Soviet tourists bought up everything they saw in the shops of the medieval Cracow market. They purchased embroidered blouses, fur-lined gloves, house slippers and every colorful product of the skilled Cracow handicraftsmen. The Polish guide stood there with open mouth, staring at the sable-furred tourists snatching at these inexpensive goods.

At the Wawel the museum superintendent took me aside and gave me a special guide. But every once in a while, as I went into or left a room, I passed the Soviet tourists and caught snatches of their reactions to the Polish guide's lecture. My own guide told me that whenever he led Soviet tourists through the Wawel they were amazed to hear that the Polish battle lords had defeated Russian armies at various times in history. Poland's rich military past, mirrored in the various banners hanging on the Wawel walls, filled the Russians with consternation. One example of heroic painting, the Slaughter of Orsha, shows the Polish war chief Hetman Wisniowiecki defeating the Moscow army in 1542; it occupies a whole wall in the Wawel.

My guide told me that some of the Soviet tourists he had escorted took the occasion to pass heretical comments. One young tourist, surprised at the polychromatic wood carvings by the medieval artist Wit Stwosz of a crucifixion scene, asked in all innocence why Christ had been crucified. An elderly tourist in the group replied impromptu, "Because he confessed a leftist deviation!"

The Wawel superintendents have been there for decades, living through various regimes. They were there under the Nazi occupation when Hans Frank, the Nazi Governor General of Poland, had his residence in the royal palace. One of the Wawel watchmen, seventy-year-old Stanislaw Janiszewski, had the job of guarding and tending the numerous clocks. He had a bunch of keys of all sizes that wound the medieval clocks. He also looked after the seismograph situated in the Wawel cellar. Janiszewski told me about the orgies that went on in the Wawel during the Nazi occupation. He would pass dreadful scenes of debauchery as he went from room to room on his rounds. The Nazi officers disregarded his presence, allowing him to continue winding and cleaning the Wawel clocks during their bacchanalia.

There is a special room in the Wawel that holds the flags that the Polish war chiefs seized in battle against the Prussian Crusaders, Swedes, Turks, and Russians. The crusader flags are decorated with the heads of fabulous beasts, reminiscent of the figures in Pablo Picasso's famous painting of the Spanish Civil War, *Guernica*. And then there are rooms whose walls are bare; legends attached to the gold-embroidered silk tapestries note that this and that historic painting, Gobelin or other precious object is somewhere abroad. My guide explained that most of these rare treasures are now in Canada where the fleeing Polish government took them for safekeeping at the beginning of the war.

The bronze and granite sarcophagi containing the bones of ancient Polish kings and the national poets Adam Mickiewicz and Juliusz Slowacki lie in the chapel and underground crypts of the Wawel. The last of the sarcophagi is that of Marshal Jozef Pilsudski. Locked behind iron bars, his coffin is covered with a red cloth embroidered with a white crown eagle. The legend reads: "To the Commandant from the legionnaires and armed forces." The grave of the first marshal of independent Poland is no longer displayed to the Wawel visitors, but my guide took me to the coffin. As we walked he told me that a few days before a fresh white flower had been found lying on the red cloth—a visitor had thrown it through the bars.

19

THE POLISH MILLENNIUM

As Poland prepares to celebrate its millennium, the ancient city of Cracow returns to the limelight in all its historic splendor. The old city, which was spared the ravages of war, is a living museum which reflects the thousand-year history of the State and the Catholic Church.

Anxious to overshadow the glory of Cracow, the Communist

regime set up new academic centers in other cities where research, primarily into Polish history, was to be carried out in accord with the Party line. For the same reason, the Seventh Congress of Polish Historians, the first under the Communist regime, was held not in Cracow but in Wroclaw, the capital of the new Recovered Territories. This was in the year 1948 at the beginning of the Stalinist period, and the proceedings were dominated by Party ukases laying down the subjects, methods and concepts to be applied in Polish historical research.

Since the October Revolution there has been a basic change in the official attitude; the Eighth Congress of Polish Historians was held in Cracow in September 1958. The shift in the site of the congress was interpreted as a return to the earlier and freer traditions of historical research. The Cracow Congress, which was attended by more than one thousand teachers of history and over four hundred researchers and historians, defined the guiding principles for exhaustive research into all aspects of the millennium of the Polish state and Catholic Church to be celebrated during a six-year period, beginning 1960.

In the official government proclamation the celebrations are limited to the millennium of the State. But the Communist regime, in fact if not in law, included the millennium of the Catholic Church as well by setting aside a six-year-period, 1960–1966, for the celebrations. The date generally accepted for the birth of the Polish state is 963. In that year Prince Mieszko was crowned the first Polish king. Three years later, in 966, the king accepted Christianity, together with all his people.

The official proclamation, in a shrewd compromise, deliberately avoids mention of either the coronation or the conversion. It reads:

> "Documents pertaining to the history of our fatherland testify to the fact that Polish statehood took final shape during the years 960–966. One thousand years ago our national community, combining the Slav tribes inhabiting these lands for centuries, arose on the banks of the Warta, Odra and Vistula Rivers and on the shores of the Baltic Sea. The framework of political, economic and cultural developments created at that time has been and remains to this day a cornerstone of the historical traditions of the people."

But the historians and publicists of Communist Poland openly remark on the fateful coincidence of the appearance of the state and the conversion to Christianity. The young Communist historian Pawel Jasienica devotes a whole chapter of his new *History of Poland* to the historical implications of Mieszko's conversion. In April 1952, he reports, the remains of an old church were excavated underneath the cathedral at Poznan. These remains include the original vessel used in 966 for the baptism of the royal court.

The first written documents on the Polish state are from Jewish hands. These were the accounts related by the famous Jewish traveler Abraham ben Jacob, or, as he was known in the Arab world, Ibrahim ibn Yakob ha-Israeli (Abraham the son of Jacob the Jew). The Jewish traveler, describing the way of life "in the country of the prince of the north, Mieszko," was amazed at the extent of the Polish kingdom. It spread over the areas of Poznan, Gniezno, Sandomierz and Cracow. In 966 there were Jewish merchants and artisans already living in these cities. They set up the first mints, and some of the earliest coins bore Hebrew inscriptions. Thus, the millennium of the moribund Jewish community in Poland is part and parcel of the millennium of the Polish state and the Catholic Church in Poland.

The purpose of the state celebrations is to prove that the present regime of Poland is the true inheritor of Poland as it originally was in the days of King Mieszko a thousand years ago. The idea is to show through ancient geopolitical documents that the Communist regime has re-established the Polish state in its original boundaries. The Chairman of the State Council Alexander Zawadzki made this propagandistic purpose crystal clear in his speech to the Sejm proclaiming the celebration. In a sudden outburst of nationalist zeal, the hard-bitten Communist leader began:

> "When a people looks back at the path it has taken in history, when it strives to seize the best of its traditions, it is through recapturing the memory of the great moments in the past and through coming to a full realization of the labor and achievement of its broad masses—the true creators of its history and culture—through these means striving to strengthen the feeling of an everlasting, living and enduring national continuity. Hence, anniversa-

> ries of events that bridge the history of our people and state are celebrated with especial solemnity. Such an anniversary in the history of our people is the millennium of the Polish state."

The Chairman of the State Council concluded by accentuating the political character of the celebration:

> "After centuries of national politics contradictory to the testament of the Piast dynasty, the People's Democracy has re-established our country in the boundaries that were those of the Polish state at its birth."

The church millennium is to be celebrated in the religious centers of the country, particularly Poznan, Gniezno, Opole and Cracow. The Catholic Church anticipated the secular organizations in gauging the significance of the millennium as an opportunity for a political-ideological offensive. The pulpits resounded with the call to arms: "As a Catholic country we must strive for a representative government suitable to a devout people."

However, the right of the Catholic Church to speak, as it does, in the name of the whole Polish people has been sharply disputed. Witold Zalewski made a basic analysis of the problem in *Przeglad Kulturalny*. He noted that the slogan, "We are a Catholic nation," which the Church is pushing in connection with the millennium, has been used by reactionary forces at various times in Poland to combat progressive ideas. The slogan has had various variations: "Poland—the fortress of Christianity," "We are a Christian country" and "Christian education." Zalewski drew attention to the fact that Poland and Spain are the only countries in the Christian world where the Church claims to represent all the people.

The chief arena for the Church's ideological offensive in Poland has been education; there the Church and the Communist regime are engaged in daily warfare. The struggle has grown even more vehement since the proclamation of the millennium. The priests who give voluntary religious instruction in the state schools started to hang religious pictures in their classrooms and lead their students in public prayers. This resulted in protests by nonreligious parents and teachers of secular subjects who saw the separation of church and state in jeopardy.

The question became so urgent that Gomulka felt himself con-

strained to make a public statement. At a special meeting of the Education Subcommittee of the Party, held on September 24, 1958, in Warsaw, Gomulka warned the Church that the regime would not tolerate any infringement on the principle of separation of church and state in education. He declared:

> "The constitution of the People's Democracy of Poland has separated church from state. That means that the state does not interfere in the internal matters of the church; however, by the same token it will not permit the church to intervene in state affairs. . . . The only master of the school system is the state, and only the state has the right to decide what emblems are to be placed on the walls of state buildings. . . . The agreement between the state and the Church arrived at in December 1956 contains no mention whatsoever of the placement of religious emblems in schools, arrangement for collective prayer by the school body or, in general, of any religious ceremonies whatsoever under the supervision of the school. The Episcopate never requested it. . . ."

Speaking at the Third Party Congress, held in March 1959, Gomulka asserted that the present regime "regards the Church as a religious institution with a call to satisfy the religious needs of the faithful." So long as the Church remained true to its calling, the regime had no intention of intervening in the Church's internal affairs. But the Church hierarchy must be careful not to overstep its bounds; it could not violate the laws and regulations promulgated by the executive arm of the state. In Gomulka's words: "Let us repeat again that we do not want war with the Church, but the Church must remain Church. . . . The medieval times, when the Church had dominion over the state, are long since past."

In the tension between the Church and the regime Gomulka came forward with the proposal that the millennium be celebrated by collecting funds among the general population toward the building of one thousand new schools throughout the country. These, in Gomulka's words, would represent a "worthy monument to the thousand-year-old Polish state."

20

THE "HERESY" OF CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI

THE PRESENT STATE of co-existence between the Catholic Church and the Communist regime in Poland represents a deep cleavage in the foundations of Communist society, which from its inception has always combatted the Church as its most dangerous foe. Co-existence in Poland, a complete exception to the general rule in the Communist world, is far from harmonious. During the brief period since an understanding was reached between two former prisoners of the Polish police regime, Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski and Wladyslaw Gomulka, the Church and the government in power have been frequently in conflict. Open strife has until now been averted despite the tension between the two basically hostile camps, only because both the Primate of the Catholic Church and the First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party are men of political vision and ardent Polish patriots. Both Wyszynski and Gomulka have yielded on their opposing ideological principles to save Poland and avoid the shedding of Polish blood.

All negotiations between Cardinal Wyszynski and Wladyslaw Gomulka, first on the eve of the agreement of December 1956 that permitted religious instruction in the school system and later after the police raids on the Mountain of Light in Czestochowa in July 1958, took place with no witnesses present. In 1956 the two leaders met in secrecy at a monastery in the historic city of Gniezno, the cradle of the Catholic Church in Poland. In view of the fact that Cardinal Wyszynski is also Archbishop of Gniezno, the choice of this city as the meeting place becomes an indication of the respect in which the chief of the Communist regime holds the head of the Catholic Church.

There are numerous versions emanating from those close to both of the protagonists of the two antagonistic world views of what happened during the first three-hour conversations between Gomulka and Cardinal Wyszynski. But both sides agree that the talks were direct, opinions were freely exchanged and that each of the men displayed an understanding of the problems that the other had to contend with in Poland's present complicated political situation.

Though remaining true to their inner convictions and aware of the pressure of external loyalties—the one man to Rome, the other to Moscow—the two Polish leaders tacitly agreed that in this historic turning point in their country's affairs they must show caution and moderation in negotiating. When necessary, they issued strong statements, but these were intended only to satisfy the extreme groups in both camps. In the political terminology of present-day Poland, they had to be "revisionist" in action and "dogmatic" in speech. This was as true of Gomulka's position vis-à-vis Moscow as of Cardinal Wyszynski's position vis-à-vis Rome.

The two leaders who hold in their hands the fate of Poland quickly found a common language. Perhaps this quick mutual understanding may be ascribed to the fact that they both sprang from the people, have similar temperaments, were both active in the underground during the Nazi occupation and were both under arrest for years during the Stalin regime.

Cardinal Wyszynski is the son of a poor organist in a village parish. Like Gomulka, who achieved Party leadership through a laborious climb upward from his humble beginnings as a worker's leader, Stefan Wyszynski gained his red cardinal's hat after a step-by-step ascent up the ladder of the church hierarchy, unaided by the influence of good lineage. Wyszynski succeeded August Cardinal Hlond who died in 1948. At that time Poland had two cardinals. Adam Cardinal Sapieha, a descendent of the top nobility of Poland, led a secluded life in his palace in Cracow. He died in the year 1951 and was never Primate of Poland.

Stefan Wyszynski was born in the village of Zuzela in the Bialystok province in 1901. At the age of twenty-three, he was graduated from the Seminary for Priests in Wloclawek, and then

went on to study law at the Catholic University in Lublin, where in 1929 he received his doctorate in canon law. Wyszynski completed his studies in Rome, Paris and Munich. He returned to Wloclawek and became a teacher in the same seminary from which he had been graduated. Later, he became editor of a theological monthly, interesting himself at the same time in the Christian labor unions. Certain Catholic circles called Wyszynski a "radical" for this activity, but he replied that the Church could not content itself with tending only to the spiritual needs of the faithful—their daily needs had to be met as well.

At the outbreak of World War II, when the Nazis occupied Wloclawek, Michal Kozal, the Bishop of the city, ordered young Stefan Wyszynski to leave Wloclawek and hide in a nearby village. Thanks to this act of prudence Wyszynski was able to avoid the fate of the 1,811 Polish priests, including the Bishop himself, who were murdered in Nazi concentration camps.

During the period of the Nazi occupation, Wyszynski actively participated in the underground resistance movement. In 1945 he returned to Wloclawek and assumed the administration of the seminary, replacing the murdered Bishop Kozal. One year later, in March 1946, Wyszynski was named Bishop of Lublin, and in 1948 he was elevated to the high church offices of Archbishop of Gniezno and Warsaw and Primate of Poland.

In the spring of 1950, Wyszynski took his first political step in Communist Poland, one which evoked considerable criticism from conservative Catholic circles in Poland. On April 14, 1950, with the consent of Archbishop Wyszynski, a *modus vivendi* was signed between the Catholic Church and the Communist regime. The Church agreed to abstain from political activities and to restrain priests from any action against the regime. The government, for its part, guaranteed the Church freedom of religious education and the Catholic press the same benefits accorded other newspapers. But one year later, the Communist regime broke the agreement.

Tension between the Communist regime and the Catholic Church in Poland mounted. The government argued that the crux of the problem lay in the Vatican's failure to appoint permanent bishops for the new territories. This was regarded as a refusal to recognize as Polish those territories which Poland acquired from

Germany after World War II in accordance with the 1945 Potsdam agreement. However, when Archbishop Wyszynski during his visit to Rome obtained the Vatican's approval for the consecration of five bishops for the new territories, the Communist regime in Poland refused to accept the designated bishops.

From that time forward, relations between the Church and the Communist regime in Poland became more and more strained. Hundreds of priests who protested the suppression of the Church's freedom were arrested; the Communist regime built up the pro-Moscow Pax movement as a competitor to the official Church.

On November 29, 1952, Stefan Wyszynski's nomination as cardinal arrived from the Vatican, but the regime refused the new Cardinal permission to travel to Rome in order to receive the red hat from the hands of the Pope. Ten months later, Cardinal Wyszynski was arrested. The arrest took place the night of September 25, 1953. Late that night, the Cardinal's residence at 17 Mlodowa Street was surrounded by the Security Police (U.B.), and the Cardinal was led off under police guard to an unknown destination.

A few hours earlier, a messenger from the Cardinal had delivered Wyszynski's strong protest to Boleslaw Bierut's chancellery in the Belvedere Palace against his involvement in a spy libel. The libel had been fabricated during the trial of Bishop Czeslaw Kaczmarek of Kielce who had been arrested in 1951 and kept incommunicado for over two years. Employing third-degree methods the secret police extorted a confession from Bishop Kaczmarek of espionage for the United States in which the Bishop involved the Cardinal and the Catholic Church in Poland as a whole. In September 1953 the regime brought Bishop Kaczmarek to public trial opening up an all-out war against the Church.

Cardinal Wyszynski's arrest followed soon thereafter and the Vatican excommunicated all those responsible for the arrest. The Cardinal's closest associates never did find out where he was being detained. They received communications from their secreted chief, but his address was never divulged. During the three years when Cardinal Wyszynski was under arrest, the Catholic Church grew into a symbol of resistance to Stalinism in Poland. Even the nonbelievers went to church, not so much because of suddenly aroused

religious sentiment but in order to demonstrate their patriotism and detestation of Moscow's hegemony.

An open expression of this national-religious resistance to the Communist system took place on August 26, 1956. On that date more than a million pilgrims from all over the country assembled on the Mountain of Light in Czestochowa. This was after the bloody riots in Poznan and on the eve of the October revolution. The sermons delivered during this huge demonstration contained no political overtones. But the unoccupied throne of Cardinal Wyszynski that stood near the altar bearing a bouquet of white and red roses (the Polish national colors) silently attested to the drama of Poland.

From that point on, events moved with lightning speed. Barely one week after Gomulka had assumed the leadership during the stormy days of October 1956, Cardinal Wyszynski was released from his monastery cell in the remote town of Komanczy on the southeastern Soviet border, the fourth place where he had been detained in isolation.

The first Sunday after his release, the former prisoner of Komanczy, dressed in the full splendor of his purple cardinal's gown, appeared before a giant crowd in the Warsaw Cathedral. Preaching with rare restraint and moderation, the Cardinal spoke about the extraordinarily difficult period through which Poland was living. Cardinal Wyszynski warned, "These days Poles must talk less about their rights and more about their duty to the fatherland."

These words set the tone and prepared the climate of opinion for the December 1956 agreement between the Church and the Gomulka regime. By the terms of this agreement religious instruction on a voluntary basis could once again be given in the school system, and the decree of February 3, 1953, forbidding the five new bishops to take office in the western territories, was annulled.

Certain Communist circles credited Wladyslaw Bienkowski, for many years Gomulka's close associate, with having prepared the ground for the agreement between Cardinal Wyszynski and Wladyslaw Gomulka. Bienkowski, a talented author, played an important role in the October revolt and now occupies the post of Education Minister. Because of his official position, Bienkowski took part in the negotiations with the Church. The key contact

man between Gomulka and the Cardinal was Professor Leopold Glueck, the pre-war economic expert for the right-wing and strongly Catholic National Democratic Party, called Endek. Like many other prominent right-wingers, Professor Glueck has collaborated with the Communist regime from the beginning. He was a high official in the Ministry for New Territories which was headed by Wladyslaw Gomulka until 1949. Now Professor Glueck has the position of Vice President of the Polish State Bank and is considered one of Gomulka's closest advisors both on economic matters and on matters affecting the Catholic Church.

The odd metamorphosis of Professor Glueck is not exceptional in Poland, where many practicing Catholics and former members of the Endek Party hold important posts in the government administration and in the diplomatic service. This is part of the Polish paradox. Its highest embodiment is the fact that two opposing leaders are both national heroes in present-day Poland—Gomulka and Cardinal Wyszynski. They are the cynosure of all eyes; on these two men the people of Poland pin their hopes—hopes that they may preserve those freedoms gained during the historic October days. Any evidence of friction between these two men consequently fills the heart of every Pole with unrest.

The armistice which Gomulka and Cardinal Wyszynski concluded was viewed as an act of desperate heresy in Rome as it was in Moscow. When on May 9, 1957, five years late, Cardinal Wyszynski arrived in Rome to accept the cardinal's hat from the Pope, he was received with coldness and lurking suspicion. Cardinal Wyszynski and the entourage of three bishops that accompanied him on his journey to Rome were met upon their arrival by a low-ranking Vatican representative. They were informed at once that Cardinal Wyszynski would have to wait some time for his audience with the Pope.

The ceremony of transference of the cardinal's hat, which usually takes two days, was rushed through in ten minutes in the case of Cardinal Wyszynski. The Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera* commented:

> "It is impossible not to view this as an open demonstration by the Vatican against the thought that it might give its consent to any form of co-existence with any Communist regime whatsoever."

On the other hand, Cardinal Wyszynski received a reception of quite a different nature from the successor of Pius XII, the peasant's son John XXIII at whose election in October 1958 the Primate of Poland participated as the only member of the sacred College of Cardinals who represented the Catholic Church behind the Iron Curtain. The especial attention with which the new Pope favored the Polish Cardinal was regarded as expressive of greater understanding on the part of the Vatican of the bold experiment in which the Catholic Church in Poland was involved.

II

In Cardinal Wyszynski's palace in Warsaw I saw, in a glass showcase, the low-crowned red hat with the extraordinarily broad rim which has been the symbolic center of a network of intrigue, both patent and concealed, on either side of the Iron Curtain. The young priest who took me through the residence of the Cardinal explained that the red hat is worn only twice: once during the ceremony of its transference to the new cardinal and the second time for the cardinal's funeral.

The handsome halls of the Cardinal's residence were hung with oil portraits of Polish cardinals in their purple robes, colored engravings of the Swiss guards at the Vatican and illustrations of historic European churches. Cardinal Wyszynski was away on his weekly tour of the country when I visited the palace, but his chancellery was feverish with activity. There were priests coming in and out, as well as lay Catholic workers from the furthest-flung provinces, here on parish business. I had a talk with one of these visitors; we discussed the relations between the Church and the Communist regime. Everyone in the Cardinal's chancellery listened to the optimistic opinions held by Modest Grzybowski, an eighty-four-year-old former landowner in Kielce who was now living off his pension and savings. The dignified old man in a threadbare black coat declared that Gomulka and Cardinal Wyszynski understood one another perfectly and would prevent any national catastrophe from occurring. "The Cardinal," he said, speaking familiarly, "is a statesman and he maintains that Gomulka is an honest, scrupulous fellow."

I expressed skepticism about the possibility of co-existence between a "Godless regime" and the Catholic Church. To this Modest Grzybowski replied that history offered precedents for such a co-existence. Opening his worn bag, he drew out a thick leather-covered book with gold-edged pages. Quickly riffling through the pages he found the passage he was searching for at the beginning of a chapter and showed it to me. He read aloud with enjoyment:

> "The first consul would have wished that the anniversary of the 18th Brumaire dedicated to the celebration of peace between France and the rest of Europe, should also be signalized by the reconciliation of France with the church. He had made every effort in order that the negotiations in progress with the Holy See might be brought to a conclusion in due time, in order to admit of religious ceremonies being introduced into the national rejoicings. But it is a much less easy matter to berate with the spiritual power than with the temporal. The winning of battles is not enough for the purpose and it is the distinguished privilege of the human mind that force is unable to overcome its energies unless attended by persuasion.
>
> "It was this arduous task of combining persuasion with force that the conqueror of Marengo and Rivoli had taken in hand with reference to the Roman Church in order to bring about a reconciliation between it and the French Republic."

"This is the historical precedent that Gomulka has been following," the old man stated, in a tone of absolute confidence. Then he showed me the book's title page, *The History of the Consulate and the Empire of France* by Adolphe Thiers. Rapping the cover with his finger, he exclaimed, "This is it!" He sounded positive that Napoleon Bonaparte had really been Gomulka's political mentor in the strategy of coming to terms with the Catholic Church in Poland.

Modest Grzybowski's sanguine view of the future is not unrepresentative of the thinking of the Polish Catholic Church. The defeatist, pessimistic mood so common in Poland emanates from Communist rather than from Catholic circles. The Church is in the process of expanding its influence, despite the fact that it lacks access to the government-controlled mass media of modern propaganda, such as the press, radio and television. The only paper to defend the interests of the Catholic Church is the weekly *Tygod-*

nik Powszechny. Besides, there are twelve Catholic deputies to the Polish Sejm who are quite vocal in the parliamentary tribune. Their speeches echo Cardinal Wyszynski's preachments decrying the moral decline of the Polish population under the present regime. At the opening session of the Sejm, in the winter of 1958, Dr. Stanislaw Stoma, the leader of the Catholic parliamentary faction, upbraided the government for not making a sufficient effort to "combat the nihilism, hooliganism and drunkenness in Poland. . . . The people are tired and impatient, because they are uncertain of the future."

But the pulpit, rather than the Sejm, is the mighty tribune from which the Church addresses the devout masses. According to Church statistics as many as 24,000,000 Polish citizens out of a total population of 28,000,000 belong to the Catholic Church. Pre-war Poland had a large Jewish minority of over 3,500,000, as well as extensive German, Ukrainian and White Russian groups. After the Nazi holocaust only about one per cent of the Jewish minority is now left in Poland, and due to territorial changes the other minorities have been sharply reduced in number and influence, leaving Poland an almost completely Catholic country. Before the war the number of adherents to the Church was 23,000,000 out of a population of 32,000,000; thus the proportionate rise in Church membership has been from 75 per cent of the population before the war to 85.7 per cent in 1959.

Catholic priests are particularly active in the Polish provinces where they supply not only spiritual leadership in hundreds of cities and villages but important guidance in all community affairs. Consequently, the friction between the Church and the Communist Party is far more intense in the provinces. It is literally visible in the marketplaces where very often the church and the Party club or cooperative stand side by side. The conflicts touch on daily social and personal problems; matters such as civil wedding and divorce, which the pulpit condemns, or the refusal of priests to baptize children or officiate at funerals for families one of whose members is active in the Party.

More than 11,000 priests are now receiving government salaries —1,200 more than at the outbreak of the war. The number of nuns has grown from 5,000 before the war to 21,000 in 1959. The largest

growth has been in the number of volunteer Catholic lay workers, mostly women from the declassed bourgeois strata who are especially helpful to the Church in child care and relief. These volunteer workers represent the Church's most aggressive element, and Cardinal Wyszynski is hard put to curb their outbursts against the Gomulka regime.

Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski is an exponent of classic *Realpolitik,* the politics of realism. He is a man with positive ideas, who has completely broken with the romantic notion of "how sweet and fitting it is to die for one's fatherland." During the students' unrest at the time of the first anniversary of the Gomulka regime Cardinal Wyszynski addressed a sermon in the Warsaw Cathedral to the youth of his country. He urged them to exercise restraint. "It is easy to die for one's fatherland," the cardinal said coolly, "but we were born to live for Poland."

21

THE BLACK MADONNA AND THE RED STAR

As WE APPROACHED Czestochowa, the landscape of poor Polish villages began to change. The straw-roofed, moss-covered huts gradually gave way to sturdy houses with roofs of tin or red clay slate. Here and there the high chimneys of ovens and brick factories, whose number has expanded conspicuously of late, hove into sight between the houses. The purple-red smoke curled upward from the chimneys in thick balls over the gray, wintry horizon to settle low above the naked trees of field and garden at the village edge. We passed more and more old-fashioned one-horse peasant wagons, incongruously rolling on automobile wheels. The wagons were loaded with the chalk rock that Czestochowa supplies to the local

chalk ovens. In the stillness of early evening, all that could be heard was the rhythmic clop-clop of horseshoes on the road or from time to time the wild cackling of the flocks of black crows suddenly rising in thousands from the plowed fields.

In the last light of the setting sun, the outlines of Czestochowa came shimmering into view. Night fell quickly over the factories and houses. Suddenly, a bright red light flashed on and off through the darkness; the dark intervals were tied together by the monotonous pealing of heavy bells. The flashing light and the pealing bells issued from the monastery on the "Mountain of Light" (Jasna Gora), the holiest place in Poland. Here millions of pilgrims stream from all over the country in winter and summer to offer prayers before the picture of the dark-skinned Madonna of Czestochowa.

Another high point in Czestochowa was shedding a far stronger light. Seemingly suspended in mid-air, huge letters spelled out the steel combine named after Boleslaw Bierut, the dead leader of the Polish Communist Party. Behind the illuminated name six cannon-mouthed chimneys belched fiery smoke toward the slender Gothic towers of the monastery on the Mountain of Light.

In these two brilliant peaks of the city of Czestochowa I saw a physical statement of the present battle in Poland between the Communist regime and the mighty Catholic Church. Here in this city of barely 160,000 inhabitants, more than anywhere else in Poland, this battle is most evident and the damage done to the Polish people by the struggle between these two great forces most perceptible. A temporary armistice has been declared, but the underground war continues.

The monastery on the Mountain of Light in Czestochowa is far more than a religious center in Poland. To the Polish people the Madonna of Czestochowa is *the* symbol of resistance against foreign oppression. The Madonna is famous for the miracles she has performed to save Poland from the infidels rather than for any wondrous cures.

Tradition has it that the picture of the Czestochowa Madonna was painted by the Apostle Luke, the patron of artists in the Catholic Church. Although the Communist regime has removed the royal crown from the white Polish eagle, which has remained

the emblem of the Polish state, that crown still rests on the head of the dusky Madonna, often called the Queen of the Polish Crown. The holy painting has gone through various adventures; it has been stolen, won back, saved from fire and destruction time and again. It achieved the high point of its fame among Catholics in 1665 when the Swedish Army, consisting of 40,000 well-armed soldiers with heavy artillery, besieged the fortress of the Czestochowa church. The fortress resisted, though defended by only 160 Polish soldiers and 70 monks, headed by August Kordecki, Prior of the Paulist Order. The siege lasted from November 18 until December 25, 1655 when the Swedes withdrew from the city with heavy losses. This remarkable victory was ascribed to the wonder-working Madonna.

In after years, the Mountain of Light of Czestochowa was the focal point for patriotic demonstrations. At the end of the eighteenth century during the period of Poland's decline and its partition among its three neighboring states, Russia, Prussia and Austria, the leaders of the Polish War for Independence invoked the magic in the name of Czestochowa to mobilize the Polish people in resistance against their oppressors, particularly Czarist Russia. It is almost inevitable that Czestochowa should now be the center of spiritual resistance to Communist Moscow.

In 1955, at the end of the Stalin era, Czestochowa witnessed the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the historic victory over the Swedes at the Mountain of Light. Several million pilgrims from all over the country poured into the city including not only the devout peasants and workers but the nonbelievers as well, the disillusioned Communists who regarded the religious demonstration as a symbol of Poland's struggle for national independence.

Czestochowa has captured the imagination of the leading Polish writers. Henryk Sienkiewicz celebrated the heroic siege of Czestochowa in his novel *With Fire and Sword.* The national poet Adam Mickiewicz eternalized the Mountain of Light in one of his poems. A wealth of plays, novels and poems have dealt with the various miracles of Czestochowa. Even the atheistic Polish Socialists realized that they could not ignore the extraordinary influence that the Catholic Church exerts on the people of Poland through the Czestochowa monastery. Consequently, such radical writers as

Stanislaw Brzozowski and Stefan Zeromski have referred to Czestochowa in their works against the Czarist regime. The latter-day Nobel Prize winner Wladyslaw Reymont went on a pilgrimage to Czestochowa and in one of his writings described his experience with great piety.

Even Josef Stalin, flagrant atheist that he was, appreciated the importance of Czestochowa to Polish politics and tried to win the hearts of the Polish people through the Holy Madonna. According to official Soviet propaganda, it was the Red Army that saved the monastery and the Holy Madonna from destruction at the hands of the Nazis during the last World War. This accomplishment was attributed to the Red Army commander who liberated Czestochowa, Marshal Ivan S. Konev and his Commissar for Culture, the Soviet writer Boris Polevoy.

One spring day in 1945, just before the collapse of Nazi Germany, the story goes, Marshal Konev called Polevoy to him and entrusted the writer with the important mission of saving the holy objects of Czestochowa. It seems that the Marshal's intelligence division had learned that the Nazis had laid 250 kilograms of dynamite under the fortress church on the Mountain of Light before withdrawing from the city. Polevoy was ordered to do everything in his power to save the church and the picture of the Holy Madonna. Immediately, Polevoy went to Czestochowa with a platoon of Soviet sappers and soldiers and entered the church to carry out his delicate mission.

The monks were naturally taken aback at the sight of the Soviet soldiers and fearful lest the Red Army might remove the holy picture. They did not begin to breathe more freely until the soldiers had located the hidden dynamite. The removal of the dynamite took several days. For his rescue of the Catholic holy objects in Czestochowa, Boris Polevoy received the highest Soviet honor, the Order of the Red Flag.

Whether the Czestochowa Madonna was actually rescued in the manner given out by Soviet propaganda or whether the whole incident was staged is hard to establish. It is noteworthy, however, that twelve years later Polevoy, now a secretary of the powerful Union of Soviet Writers, resurrected his story in an interview with the most widely read Polish magazine. He took pains to stress that

he was "happy to have succeeded in saving a picture so sacred to the Polish people."

On the long, handsome main street of Czestochowa, Holy Mary Avenue, stands a monument to the soldiers of the Red Army who liberated the city and saved the historic church on the Mountain of Light. The monument consists of a bronzed tank resting on a high platform of green sandstone from the famous Czestochowa quarries. Above the tank hangs a huge, red banner bearing the words: "The Soviet Union Is the Conqueror of Fascism." Similar banners and placards with antiquated Soviet shibboleths, no longer visible elsewhere in Poland nowadays, hang from every wall in every street of Czestochowa. In no other city in Poland did I see so heavy a concentration of Communist propaganda as I saw in the center of Polish Catholicism.

Czestochowa is the city with the strongest conflicts and greatest contradictions in present-day Poland. It has a unique economic order. Czestochowa is an important center for the Polish metallurgic industry. It is the second largest steel city in Poland, the new Communist model city of Nowa Huta near Cracow being the first. Besides mines and factories that produce building materials, Czestochowa has a large number of textile factories. Side by side with the state industry and commerce a network of underground private enterprises flourishes, made possible by widespread graft.

Czestochowa's economic prosperity, which makes it an exception among Polish cities, flows from this multitude of private shops where religious articles are made by hand: crucifixes, holy pictures, candlesticks, candles, prayer books and Christmas tree decorations. These items are exported abroad, especially to the United States, and in Czestochowa itself, the articles are bought by millions of pilgrims.

In the same small cellars and garrets where for generations the citizens of Czestochowa have been sitting at workbenches near beds and cribs, various kinds of toys, cheap ornaments and decorative trifles for domestic use as well as solid items made out of metal, leather, plastic, wood and stone are still being crafted.

To secure the necessary raw materials, such as metal, leather, rubber, dyes and chemicals, which are under the control of the

state, the owners of the workshops have to resort to smuggling and theft. The result has been that underworld and criminal elements have attached themselves to the "religious industry." For handsome fees, they undertake to provide the necessary raw materials. Only the small factories of the pro-Moscow Catholic movement, Pax, whose leader is the former fascist and racist Boleslaw Piasecki, have been receiving enough raw material. However, Pax factories represent but one-third of the industry.

Because of the increase in the number of cases of dissolute living and crime among the *nouveaux riches*, the mushrooming underground industry could not escape public view. The numerous scandals, often quite intriguing, involved too many high officials in the local administration and Party bigwigs to be overlooked. The cases turned up an unbelievable network of persons who were willing to go to any lengths to favor their families, both immediate and distant. The state prosecutors consistently ignored charges against relatives who were engaged in illegal enterprise or were smuggling steel and leather.

So long as the Stalinist censorship was in control of Poland, the news about corruption in Czestochowa was suppressed though it was bruited about through all the bars and coffee houses by word of mouth. But nowadays the Polish press is full of articles and reports about Czestochowa's role as a "center of the economic underground." The city is always swarming with newspapermen from the capital and all other places in Poland where the press is active. This does not stop the Czestochowa speculators. They go openly about their black market business, nonchalantly concluding transactions in brightly lit bars and restaurants and toasting their million-zloty affairs in brandy.

Even when police terror was at its height in Poland, the Communist regime could do nothing about Czestochowa for a variety of reasons that put this city outside the framework of the usual economic, judicial and other regulations. In the first place, the religious objects industry, which yields a yearly income of billions of zlotys, is closely linked with Catholic Church activities, and the Communist regime does not want to provoke the Church. Czestochowa is always teeming with pilgrims from all over the country, and any police action with an antireligious tinge could have serious

consequences—something the regime is anxious to avoid. This has placed Czestochowa in a special situation and has resulted in unparalleled developments.

Thus, Czestochowa is one of the few Polish cities with a population larger now than before the war. In 1939, there were 137,000 inhabitants, now it has more than 160,000. Also, before the October Revolution of 1956 private initiative in handicrafts and commerce had been almost wiped out in Poland. But there were still 795 workshops in Czestochowa, and in 1958 the number of workshops that were officially registered had climbed to 1,442. There are, in reality, many, many more, because every man who owns a legal workshop to produce religious objects or toys farms out homework to several other handicraftsmen. These home-workers are fearfully exploited. Since they cannot get their own raw material, they have to accept the slave wages laid down by their "legal" bosses, who get the material from state factories via a well-organized smuggling racket.

There are whole families working day and night in the narrow, dark quarters of the Czestochowa poor. You see several generations working in the same room, grandmothers and grandchildren toiling side by side. In these squalid home workshops, tin stolen from state factories or from canned goods containers in which food was sent by American relatives are turned into charms and medallions. Using primitive hand presses, the workers stamp the image of the Holy Mother of Czestochowa and other saints on the tin. There are numerous photographic studios in Czestochowa that prepare reproductions of various scenes from the New Testament. Local townspeople pose for these reproductions and are readily recognizable to the city's inhabitants, despite their studied dramatic expressions and Biblical costumes. The picture cards thus reproduced are sold in huge quantities to the pilgrims, whose number during the summer alone is estimated at one and a half million.

During the pilgrimage season, life in Czestochowa is completely disorganized. The streets and avenues are flooded with visitors. Almost every house in Czestochowa is a hotel, a public kitchen or a hostel. The pilgrims sleep in corridors and doorways where the Czestochowa natives rent them beds for 10 zlotys a night. The natives are very business conscious; they charge even for a glass

of water. The season is not restricted to the summer only. Pilgrims in the thousands visit the holy city during the winter and week ends throughout the year. These are the more affluent guests, who can afford to stay at the better hotels. The result is that Czestochowa earns several hundred million zlotys a year from the pilgrims, whose average visit lasts several days.

The rest of Czestochowa's income derives from the factories and the mines in the Golden Mountain. The minerals dug out are used in the production of steel, sugar and artificial fertilizers. The Golden Mountain also yields precious white and colored sandstone much sought after for building purposes now that the limitations on private construction have been eased. Sandstone is used throughout Poland for the private villas of factory directors, writers, actors, artists and the new millionaires who have made their money in private industry and commerce. The stone quarries on the Golden Mountain belong to the state; consequently, their yield is included in the black market smuggling in exchange for dollars or Swiss watches.

But in the final analysis, the true treasure of Czestochowa remains the Mountain of Light, home of the famed Madonna. There is no bargaining there. The millions of pilgrims pay the full price for religious articles, adding generous contributions to the omnipresent charity boxes.

II

When I arrived at the Hotel Polonia in Czestochowa one Saturday night and asked for a room, I was told that everything was taken. As soon as I showed my American passport, the hotel clerk put on a smile and personally escorted me to a large room tastefully furnished with modern comforts rarely to be found even in the best hotels in Warsaw. Although the Polonia is under state control, this for me was another proof that Czestochowa was situated in a world far removed from the usual desultory Communist economy.

I noticed the same thing in the hotel restaurant; the menu was richer and more elaborate than any to be found in a Warsaw hotel. Though the Polonia restaurant was filled, one did not have to wait

for service here as was necessary even in the best restaurants in Warsaw. The same was true of the dozens of other restaurants and bars in Czestochowa that Saturday night. They were all crowded, and there were thousands of people strolling in the streets outside the gaily lit movie houses.

On Sunday morning, I was awakened at dawn by a din in the hotel and the continuous sound of rapid footsteps on the street outside. Pious Catholic pilgrims were hurrying to the first mass at the church on the Mountain of Light. The day began in its customary way. The last drunks were thrown out of the closing bars; their place was taken by pale, sleepy-faced men and women drinking a watery cocoa and munching dry breakfast rolls. "The fresh rolls have all been grabbed up or sold in the back of the shop," an old Pole confided to me bitterly.

In the milk bar there was a fast turnover of early morning customers. They were mostly natives of Czestochowa, skilled and unskilled workers. The vast majority of them were from a crowded suburb with the odd name of Ostatni Grosz, meaning the "last penny," which was the name of an old tavern situated in that area more than a century before. It was so called because there the peasants spent their last grosz, or penny, on drink. Now the poorest workers live in that quarter. Most of them are weavers, earning from 800 to 1,000 zlotys a month, barely enough to feed a small family. They meet their other expenses by "side work." In most cases this means stealing hanks of wool out of the factories to take home. There the women knit socks or sweaters and sell them for low prices to the handicraftsmen who have permits for self-employment. This is how the organized Polish city workers are drawn into the network of wholesale theft on which Czestochowa's economic underground depends for its raw material. The old Czestochowa workers who, without any reticence, told me about this system used the euphemism "taking," instead of "stealing," as if it were a natural part of the new Communist way of life.

Suddenly a large group of unusually well-dressed young men and women appeared at the milk bar. Their appearance contrasted sharply with that of the shabby natives. Some of the newcomers even had cameras dangling from their shoulders and were carrying

leather tourist bags. Unlike the natives, the tourists protested loudly about the hard breakfast rolls. Their leader wore an armband with the letters PTTK ("Polish Society for National Excursions"). He turned to the manager of the milk bar and, after a sharp exchange of words, fresh rolls made an appearance—with butter, besides. It turned out that the newcomers were a group from a large excursion of more than 500 persons who had come to Czestochowa by special train from Poznan. What seemed incredible to me was the fact, told me by one of the tourists, that all the excursionists were employed in the famous Cegielski Factory. This was the locomotive and motor factory whose workers were the first to go out on strike against the starvation wages of Communist Poland and had resisted the attempts of the police to put down the strike with force.

I joined the Poznan tourist group in their trek to the Mountain of Light. As we walked, the group gradually enlarged into a procession joined by other groups from the Poznan excursion who were staying at other hotels. They had all come to Czestochowa to visit the historic church. To be more exact, the Cegielski Factory workers told me, as we walked, that they had decided to come to Czestochowa in protest against the Communist Party's refusal to permit a celebration of the first anniversary of the Polish October revolution. Before leaving Poznan, the excursionists had placed wreaths on the graves of their comrades who had fallen in June 1956. (Incidentally, the factory's very name is instructive. It was named in 1946 after the old Polish revolutionary Hipolit Cegielski; but three years later, in 1949, it became the Stalin Works. During the bloody events of June 1956, the workers tore down the Stalin sign, smashed the busts of the Soviet dictator and gave the factory back its original name.)

I asked whether Communist Party members were included in the excursions and was told that not only Party members, but Party unit secretaries had come along. "Our Party secretaries," an old worker informed me, "take their children to all the Corpus Christi processions and even throw flowers at the Madonna's figure. That's what they're like, these new-fangled Communist big shots," he added bitterly. "But they threw *me* out of the Party." He beat

his bony chest with his fist. "I was a member of the Polish Socialist Party for thirty-seven years."

"Perhaps it was for the best that they called off the anniversary celebration," another worker spoke up. "Who knows, things might have come to bloodshed in Poznan again—and, again, for nothing. What good did it do the Warsaw students to demonstrate against the closing down of *Po Prostu*? It hurts to have that militant magazine stopped, but what can anybody do about it? There's no point in bloodshed. You have to look the facts in the eye in Poland."

This was the general opinion among most of the workers to whom I spoke during my two-hour visit to the Mountain of Light. The consensus was that the Polish people had to stop the romantic dreaming and face up to the reality that Poland is in an unhappy geographic position, situated as it is between Soviet Russia and Germany.

The guide to the church gave a detailed history of every doorway, chapel and turret. He lingered over the massive fortress wall with its forged iron gates. The only access to the gates was by a wooden suspension bridge over a deep moat; when Czestochowa was besieged, the moat was filled with water and the bridge pulled up. "At this spot," said the guide, "more than three hundred years ago the Miracle of Czestochowa took place. At this very bastion a small handful of monks repelled the vast Swedish army of invasion."

Some of the younger members of the Poznan excursion passed iconoclastic remarks about the guide's bombast. But a little while later I came across the same critics piously crossing themselves as they kneeled in the huge church courtyard where a priest was sprinkling the Cegielski Factory pilgrims with holy water. I was taking some photographs of this remarkable scene of mass ecstasy when a young priest suddenly appeared and asked me whether I had a special permit to take films. This was the only time during my entire visit to Poland that I was questioned in this way. No one had troubled me at the collective farms or at the factories. The only place in all Poland where I was not permitted to take photographs without special permission was in the church courtyard at the Mountain of Light in Czestochowa.

There were 500 workers, technicians and engineers in the Cegielski Factory excursion from Poznan; not more than twenty-five of these class-conscious radicals stayed outside the cathedral during services. Inside, the picture of the Holy Mother of Czestochowa, holding the infant Jesus in her arms, hangs over the richly adorned altar. Besides the originality of the fresco technique, the picture is unusual in church art because both Madonna and Infant have dark, almost black faces. At special services Madonna and Infant are dressed in stiff, bejewelled clothing and massive gold crowns are set on their heads. In the glow of the mixed light falling on the altar from the tall candelabrum one has the impression that the holy pair are alive.

Immediately after the service, the Cegielski workers joined the long queues standing in front of the numerous confessionals. Afterward, like thousands of other pilgrims, they walked through the great fair, buying crucifixes, amulets and toys at the hundreds of stalls set out on the immense plaza around the church buildings. It is a kind of primitive Coney Island where the pilgrims can be photographed holding a picture of the Holy Madonna or speeding through the sky in the latest type of Soviet MIG airplane. Traditional Polish dishes are served, piping hot, under the open sky.

Even those workers from the Cegielski Factory who had not attended the religious service explained to me that the visit to the Mountain of Light was a deeply emotional experience for them. They were powerfully influenced by the historic import of the pictures painted by the great Polish and Italian masters from the time of the early Renaissance to the present; for, far more than any other cathedrals in Poland, the church buildings on the Mountain of Light are decorated with monumental frescoes of patriotic subjects dealing with the most dramatic events in the millennial history of the Polish people.

On my way back to the city I encountered a procession of several thousand pilgrims. Unlike the Cegielski group, this was a classic pilgrimage, consisting of peasants from surrounding villages who were carrying holy pictures and piously singing hymns that set Holy Mary Avenue reverberating. For the past 300 years such sights have been common at the foot of the Mountain of Light.

But now pilgrims of an entirely different character are visiting

Czestochowa. They are the intelligentsia who, until recently, saw the holy city as merely the center of fanatical superstition. What has happened is that the leaders of the Catholic Church have adopted a new technique. They now organize processions by profession or industry. Lawyers, teachers, journalists, doctors, engineers go to Czestochowa together, as do locomotive, steel or textile workers from specific plants and localities. These pilgrims are very new and quite different from the old-fashioned devout peasants. There are large groups of workers and professionals whose hopes for a higher standard of living under the Gomulka regime have evaporated. Among them are many disillusioned Communists who make the pilgrimage to the Mountain of Light as a sign of their dedication to the cause of Polish national resistance.

Awareness of the defection of important segments of their followers made the Communist leaders in Poland uneasy. The government accused the "Cardinal's Institute" in Czestochowa of putting out brochures and propaganda material without the censor's permission. These blue-covered brochures containing sermons by Cardinal Wyszynski and other dignitaries of the Church were not distributed underground. After the agreement concluded between Gomulka and the Cardinal in December 1956, they were sold openly on the Mountain of Light. The fact that Czestochowa was printing uncensored brochures was not in itself a matter of great moment, but the Communist regime seized upon it as a pretext for administrative action. First the authorities delivered a formal warning to the Czestochowa diocese, declaring that the publication of uncensored material was a breach of the agreement. When this warning was disregarded, the government went into action. On July 21, 1958, the police searched the monastery on the Mountain of Light. This was the first time in the history of Communist Poland that the autonomy of the church was infringed upon.

The Communist regime was anxious to remove any suspicion that the police action had antireligious overtones. The press quoted the relevant "inflammatory passages" from the confiscated brochures. One sermon by Cardinal Wyszynski came under particularly heavy attack. The Cardinal had said:

"The enemies of the people always begin by fighting the church; they even fight the Holy Madonna. Our own press is now doing what the Germans did not dare to do in Poland. What the Germans did not do is now being done by the Poles, in the Polish language, in Polish newspapers."

The police action in Czestochowa stirred up devout Catholics in Poland as well as in the outside world, where it was regarded as presaging a revival of antireligious activity in Poland and a return to police terror methods. It became necessary for Wladyslaw Gomulka to issue a calming statement. He declared that his regime had no intention of breaking its agreement with the church; it intended to continue to permit voluntary religious instruction in the school system. But at the same time Gomulka reproached the church for not keeping its part of the agreement by carrying out "activities against the government, both openly and secretly."

The government took no further action against the Church. In other Communist countries such conflicts almost always end in arbitrary decisions against the Church, and the public never even hears about them, but in Poland a lively debate sprang up over the relations between Church and State. The Church was permitted freedom of expression and took full advantage of it. Its voice is heard not only from its own pulpits and from the influential Catholic magazine *Tygodnik Powszechny* but even in the Communist press. Often the Church's official statements are stronger than those of its adversaries.

As a matter of fact, the Communist apologists take a remarkably mild tone; one might even call them naive in their call for "mutual tolerance" between believers and nonbelievers. Thus, the influential Communist magazine *Politika* opened its columns to a debate between its editors and the heads of the Czestochowa diocese. The editors declared:

"From a Catholic point of view, the Marxist ideas about the nature and role of religious belief are false. . . . So it is naturally the duty of the Catholic Church to oppose the Marxist point of view, and the Church cannot be condemned on that score. But we must protest the Church's refusal to grant the same rights to its ideological opponents."

On the same page, *Politika* printed a bitter protest by the Czestochowa diocese against an anti-Church story headed: "The Factory of Illusions" which appeared in *Politika* on August 9, 1958. After answering this protest point by point, *Politika* came to this conclusion:

> "We are not writing these words to inflame our readers against belief and religious sentiment. We are convinced not only that this is unnecessary in Poland but that it is dangerous to agitate any part of the population for or against religion. We wish only to foster a factual, serious and calm exchange of opinion, and we should like to believe that our reply will be taken in the proper spirit."

The chief argument advanced by the Communist press is the appeal to patriotism; the church leaders are constantly reminded of the danger from the outside that threatens Poland when the conflicts inside the country become severe. All the writers insist that Poland must maintain its national unity in the face of that threat. In the words of Szczesny-Dobrowolski, writing about the Czestochowa events in *Zycie Warszawy* on September 17, 1958:

> "A third party has always benefited from Poland's internal struggles—and that third party was always merciless and brutal."

The author of those words knew whereof he spoke. A veteran Communist, he had spent five years in prison without trial during the Stalinist police regime in Poland and had been let out much later than Cardinal Wyszynski. Sadly, he asks: "Will not the Church reckon with this danger?"

22

PAX MOSCOVIAE

THE ORWELLIAN COMPLEXITY of life in present-day Poland can best be grasped by taking a close look at a single organization, one of the most powerful and most mistrusted. This is the organiza-

tion Pax of which the only safe summary description must be that nothing concerning it is quite what it seems. Pax presents itself as a Catholic organization; its members call themselves Progressive Catholics; at the same time, it is abhorred by the Church and by the millions of Poland's devout Catholics and is denounced as a Communist front. Pax faithfully follows the political lines laid down by Moscow; yet its leaders are former Fascists and anti-Soviet guerrillas. During the crucial days of the Polish October Revolution Pax supported the anti-Gomulka Stalinist faction, and today it enjoys the full support of the Gomulka regime.

Although Pax is not a mass organization but merely an elite group of about 200 members, the Communist regime granted it the privilege of sending its own deputies to the Diet (Sejm) where they occupy the benches reserved for "non-Party" men. Pax is a closely guarded, inner circle of professionals and intellectuals, but through its numerous industrial and trade enterprises it exerts tremendous influence. This was clearly illustrated at the nationwide municipal elections held on February 2, 1958. Pax ran 300 candidates on the single Communist-controlled ticket of the so-called National Unity Front. The Pax candidates in towns and villages were for the most part executives or employees of business organizations either directly sponsored by Pax or commercially dependent on it.

Officially the Pax organization derives its income from its publishing company, but actually most of its enormous funds come from a network of industrial and commercial enterprises with a total turnover of several billion zlotys and a net profit of more than 100 million zlotys a year. Pax operates as a capitalist cartel, yet, unlike other private enterprises in Communist Poland, it enjoys all the privileges and tax exemptions of the government-run institutions. It is true that after the October upheaval some Pax enterprises have been taxed but with a good deal of leniency.

Pax is an industrial empire that operates with exemplary efficiency and represents a unique social phenomenon. It displays perfect flexibility in adjusting itself to every new political development and turn of the Party line. The spectacular growth of the Pax empire can be accounted for only by the fact that behind it stands the greater empire of Communism which Pax serves well.

The powerful Pax press faithfully echoes the Moscow line with a zeal greater even than that of the official Party press.

Pax was founded in 1945 at the beginning of the Polish Communist regime when Gomulka was First Secretary of the Party and Vice Premier. In the minds of its creators the task of the new organization was twofold: 1) it was to provide the impression that the regime enjoyed the support of the Catholic masses, and 2) it was to undermine the position of the Church which had stubbornly refused to cooperate with the Communists. During the following twelve years, four of which Gomulka spent in jail, it gradually became obvious that the Church was the rallying point of the opposition to Communism and Moscow domination. No wonder, therefore, that Gomulka's first move, on his return to power in 1956, was to reach an understanding with the recognized leader of Polish Catholicism. Since Gomulka's main political objective was to make peace with Cardinal Wyszynski, most Poles expected him to liquidate Pax, all the more so because its leaders had done their best to prevent Gomulka's return to power. On October 16, 1956, the Pax daily in Warsaw, *Slowo Powszechne*, printed an article by Boleslaw Piasecki, President of the Pax organization, in which he warned the Polish press that unless it adopted a more moderate tone and stopped its attacks on the Stalinist regime, the government would have to resort to brutal measures, including proclamation of martial law. Piasecki's article was interpeted as a direct appeal to Moscow to come to the aid of the Polish Stalinists and as part of the strategy of the Natolin group.

Nevertheless Gomulka, no doubt under pressure of the still strong Stalinist elements in the Polish Party, decided to keep Pax alive as a powerful bargaining point against the growing demands of the Church. Gomulka's decision not to liquidate Pax has exposed him to violent attacks from the Church and Polish liberal opinion, but he has remained undaunted. However, the advent of Gomulka has resulted in one important change. Before the October Revolution, Pax and its leaders had been as protected from public scrutiny as the regime itself. Now Pax and its activities can be openly criticised. Hence the Polish press dug up the unsavory story of Piasecki's past.

II

Twenty-five years ago Boleslaw Piasecki came into public view as a leader of the youth organization of the reactionary and anti-Semitic Endek (National Democratic) party. For Piasecki this youth movement was not "radical" enough, and, in 1934, he split it by forming a movement of his own, which he called Falanga and which was modeled on the Fascist and Nazi youth movements. Piasecki first tried to create a mass organization, but, realizing that he lacked the magnetic oratorical powers of Mussolini and Hitler, he switched to semiconspiratorial activities and concentrated on building up elite groups of fanatics personally devoted to him. The student members of the Falanga acquired some notoriety by armed attacks on their Jewish classmates. This strategy earned Piasecki the nickname "Zyletkarz"—an English equivalent would be "Gillette-man"—because the chief weapon used by his adherents was a mounted razor blade.

Theoretically, the Falanga movement was a hodgepodge of Mussolini's "corporate state" and Hitler's racialism (one of the Falanga's professed objectives was to rid Poland of "Jews and Freemasons"). Since most of his adherents were middle-class youths with deep-rooted Catholic traditions, Piasecki, never worried by the problem of reconciling his various views, asserted his movement's strict adherence to Catholicism, claiming that this made the Falanga an original Polish version of Fascism. Politically, however, this "original" Polish totalitarianism was indistinguishable from its prototypes. Arguing that liberalism and democracy were in a state of decay and that the future belonged to Fascism, Nazism and Bolshevism, Piasecki, until the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939, championed a policy of Polish-German friendship and ridiculed as "alarmists" and "foreign agents" those Poles who warned their country against Hitler.

It is known that shortly after the Germans occupied Poland, Piasecki negotiated with some Reichswehr generals with a view toward creating a German-sponsored Polish movement against Soviet Russia. When the administration of the conquered Polish territories was taken over by the Gestapo, Piasecki was suddenly arrested. However, a few months later he was released, thanks to

some still unexplained intervention. Piasecki then proceeded at once to organize an underground of his own, called the National Confederation and directed chiefly against the Red Army stationed in the Soviet-occupied provinces of Poland. In 1941, after the Nazis attacked Russia, Piasecki's underground fought both against the Germans and, in Eastern Poland, against the Soviet guerrillas.

In 1945, Piasecki was captured by the Russians and taken to Lublin, the seat of the first Polish Communist government. At that time the Soviet Ambassador to Poland was Marshal Bulganin and the chief of the Russian security police in Poland, General Ivan Serov. Piasecki once again gave proof of his extraordinary versatility and political opportunism by promising to serve Russian interests in Poland. Ivan Serov, instead of having him executed, set him free. According to Leopold Tyrmand, author of a lengthy essay on Pax published in the largest Polish illustrated weekly *Swiat*, Piasecki, as payment for his release by the Soviet NKVD, devoted himself to the task of undermining the influence of the Catholic Church in Poland by "boring from within" and by creating a Catholic organization of his own.

It might have seemed that these revelations would deal a deadly blow to Pax, but the organization weathered the storm. In January 1957, after a group of fifty Catholic intellectuals publicly seceded from Pax, Piasecki and the Vice President of Pax, Dr. Jerzy Hagmajer, also a former leader of the Falanga, were received by Gomulka. The hope that the new Polish regime would liquidate Pax was definitely dispelled when Gomulka included the Pax movement in his National Unity Front during the parliamentary elections of 1957. A few days after the elections, on January 22, 1957, Piasecki's sixteen-year-old son Bogdan was kidnapped in daylight from one of the business thoroughfares of Warsaw. Two men were seen taking him into a taxicab which drove to a downtown building. There the kidnappers and their victim vanished.

For almost two years the Pax daily *Slowo Povszeche* ran on its front page a picture of the vanished Bogdan with the standing offer of a substantial reward for any information on his whereabouts, but no clue was forthcoming. On December 9, 1958, the

Polish police suddenly made an official announcement that the body of young Piasecki was found on the street where he was last seen on January 22, 1957.

In view of his personal tragedy the press attacks against Piasecki stopped, and Piasecki himself withdrew from public life. But a few months later he was back in the limelight. At the Pax congress held in Warsaw in May 1957 he launched a vicious attack against the so-called revisionists whom he denounced as enemies of Socialism and of Polish-Soviet friendship. This speech, as well as an article by Jerzy Hagmajer published a few days before the congress charging the opponents of Pax with moral responsibility for the kidnapping of Bogdan, revived the press attacks on Pax.

In order to counteract this campaign, Pax issued a long report on its background and present activities. The official historians of Pax do not discuss the pre-war history of its leaders, nor do they make any mention of Piasecki's "conversion" to Stalinism. In an obvious effort to give their organization an aura of respectability they say that its original funds were provided by Piasecki's wartime underground. Shortly after the war, the leaders of this underground used the remaining money—all in American dollars—to found the Catholic progressive weekly *Dzis i Jutro* (Today and Tomorrow). Hagmajer is said to have contributed $3,000 and Piasecki, $1,000. The official Pax historians also claim that August Cardinal Hlond contributed $500. Since Cardinal Hlond died several years ago, the claim is unverifiable, but it is useful as "proof" of the organization's affiliation with the Catholic Church and of its patriotism, for the late Cardinal was known as an uncompromising foe of Communism.

From the outset the founders of the organization Pax and of the Pax Publishing Company displayed extraordinary resourcefulness in procuring money for their enterprises. Their first weekly, *Today and Tomorrow*, which began publication on November 25, 1945—the editorial offices consisted of a small room in a ruined building in Warsaw—proved unprofitable as a commercial venture. Money had to be procured by other means. Piasecki and his friends always discovered those means and managed to do profitable business even during the period of forced nationalization

when other private enterprises either went bankrupt or were taken over by the government.

Most of the original founders of the Pax movement have dropped out at various times but Piasecki and Hagmajer, the two inseparable friends, remain. They are very different from one another, physically and intellectually. Boleslaw Piasecki is tall, broad-shouldered, blue-eyed, blond and would pass the most exacting Nazi tests of pure Aryanism. Jerzy Hagmajer is a small fragile man, slightly hunched, with a large head of disheveled, graying black hair. By profession he is a doctor, and I was told in Warsaw that he is a successful and talented surgeon. Piasecki and Hagmajer have one feature in common: both are extremely shrewd businessmen, and it is to their business acumen as well as to their political flexibility that Pax owes its growing prosperity.

The first Pax enterprise was a bus company operating in Warsaw and the surrounding towns and villages. It was started in the spring of 1946 when the Polish capital was just beginning to dig itself out of its ruins. The roads were in poor repair; there was a shortage of cars, garages and mechanics; gasoline was at a premium; spare parts were practically unobtainable, and the state transportation services were woefully inadequate. The Pax bus company did a thriving business. After two years, the company had built a network of garages and workshops employing a considerable number of skilled mechanics. Then it was taken over by the government. Another transportation company founded by Pax, a truck service, operating between Warsaw and the northern provinces as far as Danzig, also existed for two years.

At the beginning of the regime, when the Moscow hold on Poland was still not firm, Pax was often subjected to severe scrutiny by government officials who disliked the organization. Though some of its enterprises were nationalized, the Pax businessmen continued to be active, concentrating on fields which the government had not yet penetrated or which were disorganized as a result of hasty nationalization. In January 1957 Pax acquired all the stocks in the Ivis textile factory which manufactured fishermen's nets and hose for firemen. Under the management of Pax experts the factory prospered, supplying 50 per cent of Poland's needs for the above-mentioned products.

Among the smaller enterprises founded by Pax in its early years was a firm of decorators, specializing in organizing various exhibitions and employing a large number of artists, architects and carpenters. This "private" firm often worked for the government; for instance, it organized the pavilion of the Ministry of Agriculture at the New Territories' Fair at Wroclaw and the Polish pavilion at the 1948 International Fair at Prague. The capital of that enterprise was 90,000 zlotys; it was soon increased to 300,000. The Pax Publishing Company owned 80 per cent of the stock. The profits from this enterprise would have been larger if its most important customer, namely, the Communist government, had paid its debts punctually, but the payments took several years. As a result the enterprise was liquidated in 1950. The government then created its own agency to organize exhibitions, and once again Pax switched to other profitable businesses.

The two most important existing Pax enterprises which are in a process of continual expansion are Veritas and Inco, large combines including 35 factories and a network of retail stores, with over 3,000 employees and a yearly gross income of more than 300 million zlotys. Veritas produces 40 per cent of the religious articles, such as clothes for the clergy and candles, used by the Catholic Church in Poland. The religious articles account for only one third of the output of Veritas factories. In addition its workshops make a number of "secular" articles for government stores and for export. Other products include paints, varnishes and chemicals, covering the needs of the Polish film industry which formerly depended on imports.

Inco plays an even more vital role in Polish economic life than Veritas. Founded in 1946, Inco holds a number of important patents for chemicals used in the building industry in Poland. Most of the patents Inco bought were developed by government engineers during their employ in government laboratories. One of the most successful of these inventions, which brings enormous profits to Inco and fat royalties to the engineer, is a building cement called Abisol. When the Soviet technicians who built the Palace of Culture in Warsaw became interested in the product, a group of Inco chemists was invited to Russia to help organize the production of Abisol and to train Soviet technicians in its use. Abisol

proved far superior to Soviet-manufactured cements. The Inco factories also produce precision tools, medical instruments and a number of chemicals which are used by government-run enterprises. Altogether Inco owns 24 factories manufacturing some 80 different products.

This entire industrial empire is controlled indirectly by the official Pax organization, the Pax Publishing Company. This great publishing concern, second in size only to the government-owned *Prasa*, publishes the big Warsaw daily *Slowo Powszechne*, which issues special editions in all seventeen provincial capitals, and a number of literary and religious weeklies and monthlies.

The list of the Pax Publishing Company includes many prominent Polish writers, some of them Catholics sharply opposed to the Pax policies. The reason for this is that Pax enjoys unusual privileges with regard to paper allotments and censorship. Even under the Stalinist regime, the censor permitted Pax to publish books that were counter to the principles of Socialist realism, including translations of Western novels, mostly by French Catholic writers. Thanks to its other enterprises, the Pax Publishing Company always had foreign currency to pay foreign writers.

Pax was the first publisher to reissue novels by prominent Polish writers in exile, most of them known for their nonconformity. Each of their novels became an immediate bestseller. Particularly daring was the republication by Pax of the novels by Maria Kuncewicz, founder and honorary president of the International Pen Club Center for Writers in Exile. One of these novels (translated into English as *The Conspiracy of the Absent*) deals with Polish *émigré* life in wartime London and the patriotic anti-Communist underground in Nazi-occupied Poland. Despite its controversial nature, Pax published this book without the slightest abridgement or alteration.

Especially successful is Pax's Catholic theological literature. The edition of the New Testament, published soon after Pax was founded, had printings amounting to several hundred thousand copies. Pax also has a high school in Warsaw, attended by 200 boys, mostly children of Pax employees. As in government schools, there is no charge for tuition.

III

In the course of my investigations on the past and present of Pax, I paid a visit to the central offices of the Pax Publishing Company, situated in a modern six-story building at 43 Mokotowska Street in the heart of restored Warsaw. I was struck by the discipline and efficiency of the organization, from which the overgrown, clumsy bureaucratic machinery of the state-controlled institutions could learn a great deal. The general atmosphere was very different from the harsh and gray humdrum atmosphere of Communist Poland. I suddenly found myself in an environment breathing with culture and refinement. The people were courteous and unassuming in manner.

The foreign publicity director of the company, attractive Anna Niklewicz, had the smoothness and suavity of a British Foreign Office official. A slender blonde in her thirties, she is the daughter of a publisher of the pre-war *Gazeta Warszawska,* organ of the reactionary, semi-Fascist and anti-Semitic Endek Party. As a young student she was a member of Piasecki's Falanga. Under the Nazi occupation she first fought in the ranks of the Home Army and later joined Piasecki's underground group. "I know," she told me, "that for someone familiar with the politics of pre-war Poland it is hard to understand how a rightist and Fascist movement came to champion Socialism or Communism. But you must not forget that all of us have gone through the ordeal of fire and the guerrilla war, which among other things rid us of our former anti-Semitism."

Anna Niklewicz made no attempt to deny the charges leveled in the Polish press against her organization. She confined herself to giving me a list of Pax enterprises, advising me to visit them in order to get a first-hand impression of their achievements. As I was about to leave, she remarked casually that thanks to Pax the Iron Curtain had been somewhat lifted in Poland. "No one will deny," she said, "that the translations of Western books, published by us throughout the period of the police regime, were a great contribution."

When I asked to speak to Piasecki, I was told that since the kidnapping of his son he had ceased to give interviews and that foreign visitors were received by Vice President Hagmajer. I had

to wait for him for more than an hour. When he arrived at last, panting, he apologized for the delay. "I have just performed a very complicated operation, my patient barely escaped death," he said.

The personal, humanitarian note Dr. Hagmajer thus struck at the beginning of our interview also marked his account of the activities of Pax. Everything Pax undertook, he implied, was in the interest of Poland, and whenever Pax did not serve the regime, it served the people, or vice versa. Hagmajer also emphasized the part played by Gomulka in the founding of the organization. "Our first meeting with Gomulka," he said, "took place in July 1945. The Polish government had just moved its seat from Lublin to Warsaw, and its offices were at the railway offices on Wilenska Street on the right side of the Vistula. Gomulka was then Party Secretary and held the post of Vice Premier." In January 1957, Hagmajer said, the Pax leaders had another meeting with Gomulka, and one of the subjects discussed was the rumor that the Party was planning to appoint a government supervisor of Pax, a kind of Commissar. "We reminded Gomulka," Hagmajer said, "of his former positive attitude toward our movement." Apparently that reminder was sufficient to prevent any modifications in the structure of Pax.

When I asked him how it happened that the former Falanga leaders who had fought against the Red Army had come to support the Kremlin policies, he said: "Our evolution was determined by the realization of the tragic position of Poland. We have come to the conclusion that the real enemy of Poland is not Russia but Germany. This had incidentally been the political basis of the Endek movement of which we were an offshoot. On this point there was a sharp contrast between the chief ideologist of the Endek movement, Roman Dmowski, and Jozef Pilsudski. Pilsudski thought in military rather than political terms, believing that Poland could preserve her independence only by force, while Dmowski believed that Poland should negotiate with the Allies. The Endeks always advocated an understanding with Russia."

The economic achievements of Pax are not denied even by those who continually expose Piasecki's political machinations. According to *Zycie Gospodarcze*, Poland's leading economic jour-

nal, "the Veritas and Inco enterprises operate far more efficiently than the government enterprises in many fields, and although they pay higher salaries, their production costs are lower." The reason for this, the journal maintains, is that "so far the government-run enterprises have lacked freedom of movement, and the initiative of the workers was strangled by the routine regulations prescribed from above." The journal suggests that the government-controlled industry should learn from the experiences of the Pax enterprises. At the same time it points out that Pax enjoys a number of "privileges" which it shares with government enterprises but which are denied to other private enterprises.

The Pax executives, who receive the highest salaries in Poland, travel in limousines and take expensive vacations in Western Europe, deny that their enterprises belong to the private sector. "Let us speak bluntly," we read in an official Pax report, "private enterprise, even when managed by honest individuals, must in the future come into conflict with the Socialist state, and it is impermissible to have any illusions on that score."

Striving to set apart the Pax enterprises from private enterprise, the organization's juridical experts have prepared a new statute of "Workers' societies" founded by Pax and intended to take the place of the "discredited" producers' and consumers' cooperatives of the previous regime. Under the new formula, Pax enters into partnerships with private producers and administrative agencies for the purpose of manufacturing certain articles, mostly for the building industry.

As for the personnel of the Pax enterprises, the official report says that since the founding of Pax it has attracted people who could not find employment in government-run enterprises for political reasons, such as "veterans of the Home Army, officers of the pre-war army and men who during the war served in the armies of the Western powers." According to the report, more than half of the 5,000 employees of Pax had been classified as "potential enemies of the Polish people's democracy." In other words, the report implies that Pax has always protected the persecuted, including the recent victims of the Gomulka regime, namely the members of the liquidated security police. Here again Pax makes the best of both worlds. By hiring a large number of

former security police officials, potential enemies of Gomulka, and thus removing a cause of discontent, Piasecki has allegedly been useful to the regime. At the same time he has gained the gratitude of the Stalinists which will come in handy should they ever return to power.

Between 1945 and 1956 the Pax people served as the Communist shock troops against Polish Catholicism. When the government suppressed Catholic publications loyal to Cardinal Wyszynski, Pax editors were always available to take over these publications and adapt their line to government requirements. A striking example is the case of *Tygodnik Powszechny* which was closed in 1953 because its editors refused to publish a groveling obituary of Stalin. The weekly was handed over to Pax and only after the October revolution was the publication restored to its former owners.

When the Vatican protested the persecutions of the Church in Poland, Pax sent its emissaries to Western Europe to spread the good tidings that religious life was thriving in Poland. All this was camouflaged under the slogan that Pax strove to insure "a prominent place in the Socialist camp for the values of Christianity." At the same time Pax did everything to create the impression that it was the spokesman for the Catholic masses in Poland. After Gomulka and Cardinal Wyszynski reached their agreement, Pax gradually dropped the propagandistic emphasis on its Catholicism.

While its publications still retain the term "Catholic" on the mastheads, the words "of Catholics" have been removed from the title "Committee for Industrial and Cultural Progressive Activities of Catholics within the Pax Organization," a title which officially designated Pax enterprises throughout the country. Instead of its ideological functions, Pax now stresses its economic activities which since 1957 have become the only subject of its regular reports. But in Poland the general feeling is that Pax is still used for specific political purposes which do not necessarily reflect Gomulka's own views. Although much of the organization's origin and background has been divulged since the Polish October revolution, the activities of its inner circle remain shrouded in mystery. No one in Poland doubts that the Pax leaders have remained

completely loyal to Moscow. Although they entered the political arena as totalitarian Fascists and have changed color often in the intervening years, they are still totalitarians. Indeed, even today they openly express their conviction that ultimate victory in the present world struggle belongs to the Communist East rather than the Democratic West and that the future of Europe is inseparable from a Pax Moscoviae—a peace imposed by Moscow.

23

NOWA HUTA, SHOWPLACE OF COMMUNIST POLAND

NOWA HUTA, meaning "New Foundry," is Poland's major showpiece of Communist enterprise. This new community is situated on the fertile black earth surrounding the ancient village of Mogila near Cracow. Where only ten years ago was a wheat-covered plain, now tower the giant smokestacks of Poland's greatest steel plant. Beneath them has mushroomed a new city of about one hundred thousand people who have come from all over Poland. Young men and women were brought in by train, freight cars, trucks, even by carts. They are the sons and daughters of peasants and factory workers, and they are also the former bourgeoisie, the declassed element of the Polish revolution. Intoxicated with slogans about the "ideal classless city" to be born without the inherent injustice and error of "decaying capitalism," they could hardly wait to start living in Utopia.

From June 13, 1949, when the first workmen began digging to lay the foundations, Poland's manpower and the Soviet Union's industrial capacity were placed at the disposal of the giant enterprise. Because of miscalculations by the planning experts, unexpected difficulties arose, but the project was pushed through.

While those who manned the distant plants that produced the necessary materials lived on starvation wages and stood drearily in line for rations of bread and potatoes, the builders of Nowa Huta got the best food and finest theatrical entertainment available. Built without resort to private initiative, Nowa Huta contains hundreds of stores and workers' cooperative enterprises—shops for tailoring, shoemaking, watch repairing, carpentry, lockmaking and barbering. There are nurseries and schools, in addition to hospitals, clinics, drugstores, restaurants, cafes, and bars. But no church was planned for the new city.

The steel plant itself, named after Lenin, was designed by the Soviet State Institution for Metallurgical Projects, and all equipment was modeled on that of the Soviet Union's giant steel mills at Magnitogorsk and Zaporozhe, with up-to-date improvements. The equipment is the model of automation. Here and there the visitor may encounter technicians of various kinds—engineers, mechanics and electricians who press buttons and pull levers—but few men are to be seen who perform loading or unloading operations. Trains of freight cars move through the plant to large automatic loading cranes. The management claims that the rolling mill is the largest of its kind in the world.

Steel production in Nowa Huta is continuously increasing. In 1958 a new blast furnace was opened and the mill was being extended. Official government figures quote the production of steel in Nowa Huta for 1959 as 960,000 tons. Nowa Huta is slated for further development and is number one target in the over-all plan for the development of heavy industry in Poland. According to the government investment plan, the production of steel in Nowa Huta during the next ten years will be increased to 3,300,000 tons annually. This will involve an investment of $500,000,000 which will be advanced by the Soviet Union, the main supplier of equipment and raw material for the Nowa Huta giant and the main customer.

Just beyond this façade of modern Poland lies a Poland that is ancient and unchanged. The road from Cracow winds through the ancient village of Czyzyny between straw-covered huts that have looked the same for centuries. From there the nine towering stacks of the steel plant and beneath them the rows of smaller

stacks seem almost to be a giant cathedral organ. Against the harshness of this urban industrial landscape there stands on a man-made hill a huge old stone eagle carrying a two-edged sword in its right claw. This is a memorial to the legendary Queen Wanda who preferred to drown herself rather than marry the German Prince Retiger who was besieging Cracow. The site of Nowa Huta, certainly not the ideal one, was chosen deliberately to provide a political counterbalance to Cracow, the capital of the old Polish kingdom, which the Communists have branded a "center of reaction." The idea was to create a vibrant capital of industry and production to symbolize the new Poland under Communism.

In the wide streets of Nowa Huta there are few idle strollers. I saw large groups of workers laying trolley tracks, and mixed squads of men and women doing other construction work. On a large wooden billboard in the central square are giant framed portraits of Lenin, Khrushchev and the leaders of the Polish party. On a smaller board are portraits of inventors, engineers and Stakhanovites.

Though Polish is my native tongue, on my first visit to this strange new city I engaged the services of an official guide. The son of a former bourgeois family in Cracow, he was quite willing to tell me all he knew about the city. He explained that the Communist Party's theory in creating Nowa Huta was to construct a model laboratory out of which would come the New Man of Poland, who was to be the product of all classes, parties, national minorities and areas of the country. Accordingly Nowa Huta even contains a group of gypsies who for the first time in their lives are living in a permanent dwelling place. There are only about thirty families of Jews, say one hundred persons.

Nowa Huta's rate of population increase is greater than that of any other Polish city. The young marry early and eagerly and get divorced even more quickly, but not before they have produced many children. The mothers do not worry much about their children since they are raised in state institutions. Many women are attracted to Nowa Huta not only to find work but to find husbands. At first the regime encouraged the raising of large families and paid out subsidies for each newborn infant. Later, however, a press campaign was initiated against the chaos of family

life in the new Poland. For all their success at producing steel, the Communists have not succeeded in revising human nature in Nowa Huta. The people work hard in the mills and are fascinated by the electric lights that many are seeing for the first time. They listen to lectures about the disciplined New Man of Poland, but when they get home from work, the grim atmosphere of the mills vanishes and the vodka bottle makes its appearance.

It was in December 1955 that I paid my first visit to Nowa Huta. The police regime was crumbling but the Stalinist bureaucrats were still in the saddle. However, Nowa Huta, the "sacred cow" of the regime, had already been desecrated by the poet Adam Wazyk in his *Poem for Adults.* The local Nowa Huta daily, with its peculiar name *We Build Socialism,* likewise heralded "the new mood" in Poland, and the shortcomings of the model Socialist city were being discussed with astonishing frankness. The food shortage was featured prominently in a daily serialization of the novel *Hard Roads* by Ryszard Klyss, which was running in *We Build Socialism.* Here is a sample of the narrative; a worker is discussing with a director a wildcat stoppage that has hit the mill because of an accident:

> " 'What's the use?' Boguszewicz said angrily. 'This morning the workers threw away their shovels and said they wouldn't work any more.'
>
> "Director Korta became excited. 'Why?' he asked.
>
> " 'How can I explain it to you? Just because there's nothing to eat! You understand, Comrade Director, we have no sugar, no meat, no fats, not even bread.'
>
> " 'That's a pretty story.'
>
> " 'Luckily, the foreman felt he could handle these people. Today he quieted them, but the situation continues serious. If all of the food should give out—and that could be tomorrow, throughout this whole area—what would happen then? In such an event there might even be a demonstration.' "

This novel appeared only a few months before the Poznan uprising. Notice that the reason given for possible trouble is not the provocation of the paid agents of imperialism but simply a shortage of food. It was quite clear to me that the shortage was

real not fictional. For example, beneath the heading "An Empty Canteen" the following report appeared:

> "The distribution of food in our city is lagging. The shelves of Canteen No. 16 hold only soap, toothpaste, shoe polish and large cartons of hardtack you can hardly put in your mouth. The workers who are building the hospital in our neighborhood are unable to obtain anything to eat, except from time to time a bit of sausage that makes their stomachs turn."

All types of shortages were discussed at City Council sessions. This is from one of its reports:

> "In Nowa Huta, even at this date, we cannot obtain underwear, clothing or children's shoes. There is a grave shortage of workshirts, women's underwear and socks. There are no electrical appliances and no pharmaceuticals. There is a heavy shortage of furniture. Particularly critical is the food shortage, notably the lack of meat, vegetables, fruit and canned fish."

There were other complaints. One item, captioned sarcastically "A Merry Block," went as follows: "The inhabitants of Block 8 in Quarter 31-B lead a merry life. Every day they have special attractions in the forms of thieves and drunkards. This is made possible because the corridors are always dark and because the tenants have no keys to their doors. It must be added that the bells at the entrance doors do not work—they are merely decorative."

In another item, headed simply "B-r-r-r-!" the readers of *We Build Socialism* were informed that their fellow workers in Block 3, Quarter 25-A, were shivering with cold. "If the administration demands rent why do they not provide us with heat, so that we won't be forced to go to the homes of friends on cold winter nights in order to get warm and get a little sleep?"

I learned at first hand about food in the model city of Socialism, or at least about it in the Warsaw Restaurant where the heads of the Communist hierarchy eat regularly. Inside there were two rows of massive columns, from which the paint was already flaking though the building was barely a year old. The tablecloths were filthy. My party all ordered the regular and only dinner which consisted of tripe soup, lamb, potatoes and rice. I started

hungrily on the soup, but the chauffeur who had brought me from Cracow suddenly spat out a mouthful, exclaiming, "Flies, damn it!" At first I thought he was joking. But he yelled for the waiter and displayed two flies he had fished from the soup on the tip of his spoon. My appetite vanished. Meanwhile the waiter removed the chauffeur's soup and returned in a little while with a fresh serving. Once again the chauffeur pounded the table, shouting, "The stuff is crawling with flies!" At this point my guide took over and called for the manager. The manager groveled. "The presence of flies on a winter day is something I cannot explain," he told me. "It must be sabotage." As we left the place my guide winked broadly at me: "The principal object in Nowa Huta is to build Socialism," he said. "This means to produce steel, not so much for ourselves as for the Soviet Union. Flies in the soup are unimportant."

Following that precept, the planners and builders of Nowa Huta ignored the most primitive needs of its inhabitants, such as providing heat for the apartment houses or paved sidewalks on the central avenues of the city. One afternoon I waded through the mud puddles that fill Nowa Huta's streets trying to find the repertory theater which the map shows in the center of the city. It was explained to me that changes have had to be made in the city plan, so the theater is out in the open spaces. Its director, a young woman named Krystyna Skuszenka, showed me its modern facilities and invited me to a rehearsal of the first American play to be included in its repertory—Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men.* The repertory also included, I was told, Shakespearian dramas and various Polish classics. I asked Miss Skuszenka whether she presented Soviet or Polish plays of the Socialist realism school. She smiled but did not reply. One of her assistants volunteered, "The inhabitants of Nowa Huta have enough Socialism every day of the week. When they come to the theater, they want to relax."

One Friday morning when I arrived in Nowa Huta to have a look around on my own after the guided tour, I was surprised to find the city deserted. All the shops and stores were closed, including the Warsaw Restaurant. I went from house to house and knocked at a number of doors, but no one answered. Finally one

door opened and a woman with unkempt black hair wearing a flowery dress stuck her head out. She was a member of one of the dozen or so gypsy families. "Today is the Feast of Epiphany," she explained. "They've all gone to church in Mogila." Sure enough, I found the narrow road to Mogila crowded with men, women and children in two rows. One going toward the church, the other leaving it. In the crowd were hundreds of young couples pushing baby carriages or leading small children by the hand. They were all dressed up for the holiday. It struck me that there were very few older people in the crowd. At any rate, if there is a continuing feeling that the church is a fortress in Poland, it certainly does not seem to be restricted to those who remember the old order.

I fell into conversation with one of the young couples, and they answered my questions freely and frankly. They said that when the city was under construction they had worked on holidays and seldom had dared go to church. This year, however, no one was working on the holiday except the maintenance crew. They informed me, too, that the church in Mogila conducts hourly services from six in the morning all through the day every Sunday and holiday. Asked if they belonged to the Party, my informants looked astonished. "Why not?" they replied. For them the conflict between Marxism and religion was easily resolved in the routine of everyday life.

In the huge courtyard of the church, which is surrounded by a high blue wall, several hundred people were waiting their turn to enter and attend Mass. In the meantime they were busily buying packets of incense, holy pictures, crucifixes and rosaries, all of them carrying the stamp of Czestochowa. The church was filled to capacity and, as one group of worshippers left, another group would pack the nave and a new mass would commence. As I left the church courtyard the road was still crowded with people streaming toward the church.

In the village itself I got into a conversation with some peasants who seemed rather bitter about the regime because land had been taken away from them in order to build Nowa Huta and the steel plant. There were others who claimed that their situation had improved, that they and their children had found work in the plant, that they had received compensation for their land and that

they never had been able to make a living as farmers. But one of the bitter ones said angrily: "I was born here. My great-grandparents worked these fields and here comes the devil and takes away my land. I refused to accept payment for my land. The money is worthless anyhow." This one consented to show me a hut with a thatched roof covered with moss and fungus of different shades in which you could count the centuries that had passed since the hut was built. The peasant said the hut had been standing there in the same state for several hundred years. And in the far distance, ever-present were, on the left, the gigantic smokestacks of Nowa Huta and, on the right, the granite eagle of Queen Wanda's tomb.

It was only after I had seen how people actually lived in Nowa Huta that I could fully appreciate Adam Wazyk's surrealistic *Poem for Adults*. Here is how Wazyk depicts Nowa Huta:

> From villages, from cities, in trains, on wagons,
> They come to build a foundry, to build a City . . .
> Suddenly awakened from medieval darkness,
> A wandering mass, inhuman Poland
> Screams with boredom through the December nights . . .
> Here the Vistula flows.
> The mob builds industry,
> Unknown in Poland, but known to history.
> And they are fed on the great empty words
> In slow pain, reeling from noxious coal fumes,
> Live wildly from day to day despite the preaching,
> Being forged into a proletariat.
> Meanwhile, a mountain of dross, a porridge.

This is what the model Communist city looked like at the end of 1955. This was before the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party and the official Stalin degradation. However, in Nowa Huta the "spring breezes" of the Polish October revolution were already being felt. The last Stalin portraits had been removed from public places and on the faces of the young engineers and Stakhanovites of the steel combine there already appeared the dullness and weariness of building Socialism in a rush. The builders of Nowa Huta had already come to the conclusion that their dreams of building an Eldorado which would overshadow the neighboring Cracow was only a dream.

After the October revolt, when Gomulka ended the policy of

officially inspired enthusiasm, Nowa Huta became a gold mine for the free press in Poland and the model Communist city turned into a model of errors and falsehood of the Stalin epoch. Polish writers who had at one time lauded Nowa Huta as an example of the Socialist way of life now discovered the truth that all the classic social evils, such as prostitution, venereal disease, tuberculosis, which the Marxist sociologists always had ascribed to the "disintegrating capitalist society," were as prevalent in Nowa Huta as in any other town and city in Poland. What was even worse, the Socialist model town had become a magnet for touring prostitutes who came from the port cities of Gdansk and Szczecin. After the invasion of these touring prostitutes, the venereal wards in the Nowa Huta hospitals were swiftly filled to capacity.

The so-called workers' hotels (or flop houses) in Nowa Huta showed no improvement. Thousands of itinerant workers lived under the most squalid conditions. These "hotels" were filthy wooden barracks with separate quarters for men and women. A lodging house has been built especially for mothers and children. In a story by the young, courageous writer Barbara Zeidel, published in *Nowa Kultura* of July 1957, we find the following vivid description of that lodging house:

> "The story of each of these mothers is a topic for a novel. Most of them are lonely, unmarried women. Usually two women share a room. The babies sleep in their carriages because the room cannot accommodate a crib. Some of the women have two, three and sometimes even four children, all of whom have different fathers. In the daytime the lodging house for mothers and children is quite empty. It is occupied only late in the afternoon when the mothers return from their labors and collect the children from the nurseries. These women are struggling with their bitter fate, helping one another and sharing the small gas stoves for the hasty preparation of their one-dish meals. In the evenings, when the children are asleep in their baby carriages, they entertain their man of the night."

The Polish October revolution which has raised considerably the standard of living for the peasants in the rural areas has scarcely affected the bitter plight of the industrial proletariat, even in Nowa Huta. The only change which can be easily detected in

the heart of the city is of a nature which the Stalinist planners of this model town could scarcely have conceived. During my third visit to Nowa Huta, on the first anniversary of the October revolt, I saw a gigantic wooden cross at the intersection of two streets bearing the names of Karl Marx and the revolutionary Russian poet Vladimir Mayakovsky. On the white railing surrounding the cross I read an inscription which said the square was "consecrated to the erection of the first church in Nowa Huta." In harmony with the quick tempo of building Socialism in Nowa Huta, the planners of the first church applied the most fervid devotion to the realization of their plan. The public committee for the building of the church consists of engineers, managers and workers in the steel mill which bears the name of Lenin. These aristocrats of Communist labor proclaimed a popular campaign for the building of the "newest and largest church in Poland" which would accommodate five thousand worshippers in its central nave and would have additional spacious side chapels.

The first donations for the new church came from the inhabitants of Nowa Huta, but immediately after the public announcement of this popular campaign the bank account for the building of the church was flooded with contributions from all over the land. The building of the first church in the only churchless city in Poland was interpreted as a symbol of the unique path Poland was following toward Socialism. This symbol found concrete expression in the competition for a model for the new church, which was sponsored by the government-controlled union of Polish architects, "Sarp." The overwhelming response to this competition may be gauged by the fact that 400 architects from all over Poland participated. On August 31, 1957, the results were made known, and in the church of St. Catherine in Cracow an exhibition was held of the plans submitted by all the contestants. The jury comprised the foremost Polish architects, artists, writers and church leaders. The entire press published reproductions of the prize-winning models.

It is significant that the participants in this contest were in the main young architects who were brought up under the Communist regime. Two sharply contrasting conceptions found expression in their work. One conception envisioned a rather modest church, conducive to religious meditation, which would not domi-

nate its surroundings. The other conception gave expression to the desire that Nowa Huta's church overshadow the steel mill with its grandeur. The architects representing the latter conception submitted projects for gigantic structures with towers over 100 meters high. In general, most of the plans entered in the competition reflected the influence of modern experimental architecture as practiced in the Western world. Some of them, however, followed the style of Socialist realism as epitomized in Warsaw's Palace of Culture.

The first prize was presented to a young architect, Zbigniew Salawa from Cracow, whose project the jury recognized as the "most fitting for the architecture of Nowa Huta." It is a monumental church with a tower 83 meters high. The cross on this tower will be higher than the towering stacks of the steel mill bearing Lenin's name.

In 1959, at its 10th anniversary, Nowa Huta has reached its population goal of 100,000. All the institutions essential to the normal functioning of a city are close to completion. A new daily with a more pedestrian name has replaced *We Build Socialism*, but even this paper devotes more of its space to the problem of producing steel than to the day-by-day human needs of its readers who prefer the press of the neighboring Cracow.

Thus the portrait of Nowa Huta, as depicted in Adam Wazyk's poem, remains unchanged. It is still the synthetic city which has not evolved through the natural processes of growth and development but through the Party's decree. It is rough and lacks the mellowness of the human touch. Building a modern steel plant and a new city has been a tremendous job; with Russian assistance and know-how the Communists have done it. But creating the New Man of Poland is proving to be an infinitely more difficult undertaking.

Part Five

The Warsaw Heresy

24

THE ETERNAL DIALOGUE ON POWER AND ETHICS

IN THE COMMUNIST WORLD Poland is unique in having shattered the monolithic principle according to which the Party is the sole mentor in the political, economic and spiritual life of the nation. Even though Wladyslaw Gomulka constantly stresses Poland's political allegiance to Moscow, he nevertheless concentrates on assuring the Polish intellectuals that the freedoms gained in the October revolt are irrevocable. At the 1959 Third Party Congress, Gomulka stressed Poland's rejection of the Communist practice of determining scientific and cultural issues by ukases from above. Again he reaffirmed his regime's opposition to "hampering artistic endeavors by administrative interference with the labors of the creative mind." How long Poland will be able to continue to deviate from the monolithic model of the Soviet is difficult to foresee, but the fact is that deviation and heresy have been a hallmark of the Polish Communist regime from its inception.

The first Communist government, set up by the Polish Workers' Party (P.P.R.) in Lublin under the shadow of Soviet bayonets, for three years granted legal existence to several parties that were willing to cooperate with the new regime. There was even a coalition government joined by such parties with an anti-Communist past as the Polish Socialist Party (P.P.S.), the Peasants' Party of Stanislaw Mikolajczyk and the small Democratic Party of the progressive intellectuals. However, under pressure from Moscow, the P.P.R. took over the P.P.S., its most important competitor for the allegiance of the workers, and transformed itself into the Polish

United Workers' Party (P.Z.P.R.). The Peasants' and Democratic Parties were pushed out of the coalition government, their leaders and members victimized by police terrorism. Yet these parties continued to exist, though only on paper, and were led by men loyal to the Communist Party.

After the October 1956 revolution, two new developments appeared in the Polish deviant from the Soviet Communist model. One was the agreement between Wladyslaw Gomulka and Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski; the other, an open, ideological debate within the Party about revisionist concepts. Formally, the Gomulka-Wyszynski agreement referred to only one of the areas of conflict between Communism and Catholicism in Poland—the question of religious instruction in the school system; but, in fact, the agreement represented a daring, revisionist split in the Communist monolith insofar as Gomulka granted a social force, other than his own Communist regime, official recognition. The other, far more radical deviation from traditional dogma and practice was the appearance of a revisionist opposition within the Party itself. True, Gomulka is combatting the revisionists, but the most severe action he has taken against the self-styled adherents of "the revolutionary left wing" has been expulsion from the Party. In Soviet Russia, to expel a person from the Party is to brand him forever, and expulsion leads inevitably to persecution; but in Poland there are many Party "outcasts" who are able to express themselves freely, sometimes even with the glow of a martyr's halo around their heads. In Poland it has been possible for prominent writers to return their Party cards in protest and yet continue to hold their moral and material positions. This tolerance of rebellious intellectuals is the Gomulka regime's worst crime in the eyes of Moscow.

Much of the revisionist debate in Poland has centered around the ideas of Leszek Kolakowski. The youngest professor of philosophy at Warsaw University, Kolakowski is not only a theoretician but a fine stylist and a vigorous polemicist. The originality of his debating gifts shows itself in the liveliness with which he continually anticipates his opponents' most telling arguments. His rebuttals do not take the usual positive tone characteristic of Communist apologists; instead, the young philosopher's reflections often

echo that skepticism which is the basis of genuine philosophical thought.

Leszek Kolakowski writes and speaks on a variety of themes, ranging from formal logic through ethics, from the history of Marxism to general sociopolitical problems. Kolakowski does not restrict his play of ideas to abstract sociological or historical theory; for him, the individual is the focus of all intellectual problems. Kolakowski opposes the Communist habit of seeing the individual as a mere digit and masses as ciphers with but one function—to preserve the Party, the government. This has led the Communist intellectuals to label Kolakowski's stress on the individual's role under Socialism as "existentialism."

Kolakowski reacts with extraordinary sensitivity to every question of the day in Communist Poland, every new development. He addresses himself with courage to every new problem, never hesitating to call a spade a spade. For example, he was one of the first Polish intellectuals to point out the seriousness of the anti-Semitism that flourished in Poland in the wake of Gomulka's return to power. Kolakowski published a searching analysis in *Po Prostu* of the various types of anti-Semites, comparing them to "various classes of pestiferous insects." The Jews, Kolakowski points out in this article, have always been saddled with responsibility for all kinds of social developments, the most varied and often most contradictory. When it suited the anti-Semites, any movement they were against was labeled "a Jewish conspiracy." Thus, says Kolakowski, "at one time Communists were all Jews, as were anarchists, liberals and racists, industrialists and labor leaders. No absurd categorization of Jews was too absurd for the anti-Semites."

II

Leszek Kolakowski was born in 1927 in Radom, a medium-sized industrial city and an important center of the Socialist movement in pre-war Poland. His father, Jerzy, a freethinker and radical writer, was murdered by the Nazis into whose hands he fell when Polish Fascists informed on him. Young Kolakowski spent the war years with relatives in Lodz. There he worked on his self-education, concentrating on Marxist literature.

In 1945, Lodz, which had not suffered the ravages of war, became a center for academic study in liberated Poland. Kolakowski, then eighteen, passed the entrance examinations and studied in the philosophy department at the Lodz University. He quickly became the favorite pupil of the leading philosophers, Tadeusz Kotarbinski, Stanislaw Ossowski and Jozef Chalasinski, and, most important, he was taken under the wing of the up-and-coming Marxist theoretician of Communist Poland, Professor Adam Schaff. (They afterward became ideological opponents.) Active in the Communist students' organization, *Zycie* (Life), Kolakowski belonged to the radical wing that closely followed the Moscow line and criticized Gomulka's deviations. The chief object of Kolakowski's sharp pen and oratorical vigor was the Catholic Church. His attacks on the Church were noteworthy for their erudition; he studied theology as avidly as he did Marxist literature.

In 1951, Kolakowski was one of the small group of young Communist intellectuals who were sent to Moscow for a special indoctrination in Marxism. The first-hand meeting with Soviet theoretical dogmatism soon aroused skepticism in the critical young philosopher. Returning from Moscow, he threw himself into a study of classical philosophy, selecting for his doctoral dissertation the theme of the problem of freedom in the teachings of Spinoza. After Stalin's death, Kolakowski broke with conventional Marxism. He began to point out the inadequacies of the Stalinist system, placing himself at the fore of the young intellectual elite preparing the revolt against Moscow in Poland.

On the eve of the October revolution of 1956, Leszak Kolakowski issued a call to the Communist intellectuals to refuse to serve as blind tools in the hands of the Party machine. In an article called "The Intellectuals in the Communist Movement" which was published in the Party's theoretical organ, *Nowe Drogi*, in September 1956, he openly urged them to fight "against pseudo-Marxist demagogy and the distortion of reality." In the ringing tones of a manifesto, Kolakowski asserted vigorously that any regime that was unsuccessful in winning the free collaboration of the intellectuals had necessarily to support itself "exclusively on the power of the police and the military." He wrote:

"It is the task of the intellectual not merely to express proper enthusiasm for the wise decisions of the Communist Party but also to make sure that those decisions really are wise. Communism needs the intellectuals for their freedom of thought, not for their opportunism. . . . The Communist intellectuals demand complete freedom for independent thought without any political pressure whatsoever; they demand this freedom not only in the name of abstract scientific freedom but in the name of the interests of Communism itself. The Communist Manifesto taught us that the Communist interests are inseparable from those of mankind as a whole in the areas of both production and culture. To make Marxist theory a fetish, to reduce it to the role of a conventional, apologetic décor for a social façade, is to convert Marxism from the bloodstream of intellectual life to its poison."

Kolakowski concentrated on revealing Stalinism as a "mythology" that had perverted Karl Marx's rationalist thought into a kind of dogmatic theology. The theoretical clichés about "inevitable historical processes" and "social imperatives" were disguises to conceal the criminal failures of the Communist regime. Kolakowski did not deny that every regime struggling to maintain itself in power had to commit wrongs, sometimes even crimes, but he rejected ideological systems that attempted to camouflage those crimes as acts of justice. Hence he demanded for the intellectuals the right to call a spade a spade.

Professor Kolakowski later expanded the analysis of the Stalinist distortion of Marxism that he had initiated in "The Intellectuals in the Communist Movement." In September 1957, for the first anniversary of the Polish October revolution, he published a series of four essays under the over-all heading of *Responsibility and History* in the magazine *Nowa Kultura.* A few months earlier Kolakowski had published a book, *World Outlook and Daily Existence.* These two important studies of contemporary problems in the Communist world were the center around which a great ideological debate raged.

Responsibility and History is a dramatic dialogue between an orthodox Communist and a skeptical intellectual who refuses to follow blindly the Party dictates. They are called, respectively, Revolutionary and Cleric. ("Cleric" was the term for the ivory tower intellectual coined by the French philosopher Julien Benda in his

La Trahison du Clerc in the Thirties. Benda condemned the "cleric-esthete" for isolating himself in his ivory tower of abstract moral principles to avoid involvement in the day-by-day political struggle.) Kolakowski notes with irony that in the eyes of Revolutionary "the brilliant future of the Polish people . . . is imperiled by a great conspiracy on the part of sentimental esthetes longing to stroll in the patent leather shoes of private, pristine innocence down the bloody gutters of history." Revolutionary declares that he understands the moral elements in politics as well as Cleric, but he will "not use this mad obsession with clean hands to flee the battlefield. . . . He detests the narcissism of the moralist as contrary to the principle of responsibility. If history realizes itself through brutal means, he (Revolutionary) is willing to adopt these means, not because they appeal to him personally, but because it is impossible for him to reject them. He is a realist. He views the world from the standpoint of what is, rather than, like Cleric, from the standpoint of what should be."

After this initial confrontation of the two extremes, Kolakowski observes that, on the surface at least, Cleric, the humanist, would seem to have lost the argument. But "the thing is not so simple as it would appear." The moral dilemma in which honest people find themselves cannot be dismissed lightly, because it poses the question of how far "an *honorable* person can engage in a none-too-honorable situation." However, Kolakowski does not align himself with Cleric; rather he maintains that the only situation in which the intellectual is justified in withdrawing from public life is when he faces only one choice—to defend actions that are repulsive to his moral principles.

Revolutionary, the orthodox Communist, refuses to recognize the possibility of a third force in the conflict between the Communist and the anti-Communist world. He maintains that only persons in the Communist Party ranks have the right to criticize Communism for its negative features, and he refuses categorically to grant any moralist on the outside the same right. To this Cleric replies: "I will not support any form of historical existence simply because someone persuades me that it is inevitable. . . . If crime is a law of history, then is not to subscribe to this law sufficient to make one a criminal?"

To Kolakowski, Cleric, unwilling to drop his humanist convictions, voluntarily excludes himself from history and resigns all social activities because they compel him "to pass through the custom house of political realism where all of his most precious values are confiscated." Kolakowski insists that Cleric is only a victim of self-deception if he thinks that "he has liberated himself from history by taking the side of the eternal verities." The truth is that Cleric has been pushed into this position because the contemporary situation allows him no other recourse. Passivity is not an act of free choice on the part of Cleric; he, too, is the creature of circumstance.

III

During the first years of Communist control of Poland, Kolakowski had accused the intellectuals who wished to stay out of politics of "utopianism and naive sermonizing"; now the same accusations are made against him. To this, Kolakowski replies that "something has changed" in the interim; sardonically, he reminds his opponents that one of their opponents in the old debate, a man who wrote under the name of Pawel Konrad, had been "murdered by the missionaries of great historical justice."

> "Those who are participating in the present discussion must keep that fact in mind when they repeat ten-year-old arguments word for word. They must remember to what lengths it was possible to go at that time, as it is now, to justify everything and sanctify everything with clichés about historical imperatives, political realism and the one-choice situation to which our world is apparently doomed."

Kolakowski draws a parallel between the distorted Marxism of the Stalin era and religious dogmatism: each can produce situations where the "believer in Providence blesses the stone that splits his head." Like the church, moreover, Stalinist Communism apportions the world between "the damned and the saved, a world that is God's and a world that is Satan's, the tribe of Abel and the tribe of Cain, who in turn have divided the entire world between themselves: ideas, tools, social relations, morality, art, science, tradition, and, even more—private feelings and taste. They have even

divided nature between themselves. . . . That is why Stalinism has demanded either total assent or total dissent and has been remarkably effective in persuading the world to accept this division."

Kolakowski is convinced, however, that both the moralist and the realist viewpoints are justified. Hence, Stalinism's blanket condemnation of the moralist "substitutes for the scale of morality that of the inevitability of historical processes. . . . Actually, the historical and moral scales are distinct and independent: historically, certain valued ends are actually achieved through immoral means but that does not alter the value of the ends or the immorality of the means. . . . Good cheese may be produced in excrement, but both cheese and excrement retain their characteristics regardless of the connection existing between them. The danger resides in the substitution of the criteria of necessity for those of morality."

A skeptic, Kolakowski maintains that the generations-old debate between Cleric and Revolutionary "remains unresolved not merely because we have no solution but because, largely speaking, there is no solution." He goes on to advocate an attitude of skepticism toward the teachings of those prophets of history who are bold enough to attempt detailed predictions for the future. He voices the heretical thought that Karl Marx's prophecy that Socialism will liberate mankind from the domination of historical processes is still unfulfilled. There has, so far, been no evidence that justice can be achieved through criminal means. Consequently, Kolakowski argues:

> "No man can be free of responsibility, active or passive, on the ground that his behavior is only a small part of a specific, historical process. A soldier is morally responsible for crimes he commits at the command of his superior. . . . A soldier who, in carrying out a command, participates in mass murder of civilians is responsible for genocide. It is his moral duty not to carry out this command."

Analyzing the determining conditions in the Communist world, Kolakowski concludes that there is only one way to cure the disengaged intellectual esthete, supposedly a great danger to the Communist regime: it is to fight the Stalinist principle that the ends justify any means, a principle which teaches that "one can use lies that truth may triumph, and crimes to pave the way for human-

ity." In addition, the Communist Party must put an end to the Stalinist "single alternative blackmail," which makes it impossible for the intellectual who is morally sensitive to express his doubts openly without immediately being condemned as a foe of Socialism. The result of the refusal to countenance any social criticism in the Communist world has been to force any person who dared to divulge the slightest independence of thought not in accord with the official Party line into the camp of the anti-Communists.

This leads Kolakowski to the subject of Communist renegades. He cites the example of Arthur Koestler:

> "Arthur Koestler is a renegade not because he is the author of *Darkness at Noon*—a novel that is without doubt part of modern cultural history—but because of his activities during the last few years. Pierre Hervé is also on the way to becoming a renegade, and, again, not because he wrote *La Révolution et les Fétiches*, a meager criticism of a few Stalinist principles, but because he afterward showed himself willing to ally himself with real reaction as the lesser evil when compared with Stalinism. . . . Those people are the renegades from Communism—and their number is sufficiently large—who, having broken with Stalinism, suddenly begin to see in it the *only* danger to the world and are ready to ally themselves against it with everyone and anyone—with colonialists, counter-revolutionaries, with the most outspoken forces of political reaction. Seized with the madness of their anti-Communist mission, they begin to think of Fascism as a specter conjured up by Stalinism. Anti-Stalinism is a sufficient argument for them to link arms with each and every opponent. Tacitly, however, they accept the Stalinist vision of reality with its theory that there can be no third force. They themselves become the best illustration of this theory. . . . So renegation is actually a great triumph for Stalinism."

Leszek Kolakowski is the spokesman for a constellation of young authors and sociologists in Poland now occupying important positions in public life and expressing bold opinions. The fact is that one year after the October revolt the Gomulka censor has begun curbing heretical outbursts, particularly in newspapers with mass circulation. But the literary and scientific periodicals are continuing to debate Professor Kolakowski's theories. Even more important are the discussion clubs, a new development in Poland that came in with the October revolution. Reminiscent of the Jacobin

clubs of the French Revolution, they are gathering points for the young intellectuals who were the avant-garde at the beginning of the Communist regime and were the first to demolish sacred Communist dogmas. All in all, this is an important aspect of the Polish phenomenon in the Communist world; for it was the young people, who grew up under the Communist regime and have benefited most from it, who placed themselves at the head of the October revolution against Moscow and have kept on fighting against the return of Stalinism to Poland.

IV

It was a discussion club that offered me an opportunity to see first-hand how Leszek Kolakowski's ideas infiltrate through various levels of the Polish intelligentsia. The discussion I attended took place one evening in the club of the Czytelnik publishing house on Wiejska Street in Warsaw, quite close to the Polish Sejm (Parliament). The walls of the basement where the club met were covered with surrealistic paintings (another symbol of the changes going on in Poland). It was packed with a motley crowd of university professors, writers, painters and even some army officers. The audience included former prisoners of the Stalin era who had not been released until after the October revolution, as well as the first victims of the Gomulka regime—editors and journalists who had been expelled from the Party because of their revisionist ideas. The hall was tense with anticipation, because the subject of the evening was "Nationalism," and Kolakowski himself was to speak.

There was a murmur of disappointment when Kolakowski, lean and ascetic-looking, lowering his head of thick, blond hair in embarrassment, announced that he had decided to speak on "The Concept of Ideology," rather than on Nationalism. An officer was the first to object. Why, he cried out, had the speaker changed the subject? Kolakowski answered, without any attempt at obfuscation: nationalism was "too strong a subject" for the present times.

Kolakowski's speech, like his essays, was studded with vivid metaphors. He began by analyzing the distinction between ideology and science. Ideology, he premised, does not resemble pure theory, whose goal is to establish an objective truth: ideology aims

to provide certain social groups with a motive force for behavior of a special kind.

> "This definition of ideology derives from Marx; but in Marxist literature, as distorted by Stalinists, ideology is identified with pure theory. However, ideology must be judged not according to its accuracy or inaccuracy but according to its practical effectiveness, its real accomplishments. Ideology takes the most varied forms; one of them is reliance on legend, on myth. When any ideology becomes permeated with the mysticism of irrational dogmatists, it becomes a kind of religion."

As two examples of this conversion of ideology to religion, Kolakowski cited Christianity and Stalinism. He insisted that "religion was never a science" and that Marxism "was turned from a science into an ideology. The parasitic spider web of ideology gradually consumed the web of science." Karl Marx's chief contribution, as Kolakowski saw it, was that he "took the mock bronze off the face of Socialist ideology, wiped away the superficial sheen of Utopia and myth, and revealed its true historical role. . . . The claim that the working class is free of any mystification is a piece of (uncomprehended) dogma that has no relation to the Marxist concept of historical determination." The distortion of Stalinism, in Kolakowski's opinion, far from being an innocent deviation, was part of a calculated strategy. "Stalinism was no mistake despite its crimes, because major criminals never commit crimes by mistake." It was Kolakowski's thesis that:

> "The method that Stalin used to destroy Marxism was to introduce a total ideologizing of science and thought. Stalin destroyed science by spreading the illusion of the Party's infallibility and exclusive monopoly in interpreting scientific truth. And, just as the Pope's sanctity and infallibility had to be confirmed by citations from holy writ, so Marxist teachings were cited to confirm Leninism and Stalinism."

There was a lively debate when Kolakowski had concluded. The opinions expressed ran the full gamut of Polish public thinking. Disillusioned Communists were heard mocking the Soviet interpretation of Marxism which predicted, for example, that collectivization would be completely realized by 1929. On the other

hand, an orthodox Marxist charged that the speaker's belittling of the role of ideology was itself the seed of a new ideology.

Kolakowski patiently answered his opponents, taking up each of their counterarguments in turn. No, he was not against ideology as such. On the contrary, as he conceived it, no society could progress without a specific ideology, and anyone who believed he had completely liberated himself from any ideological influence was only a victim of self-deception. But, Kolakowski repeated, he was against the tendency to disguise ideology as a science, to transform it into a kind of religion. He also clarified his position on Marxism, replying to those who accused him of no longer being a Marxist:

> "I accept Marxism as a way of thinking regardless of the fact that certain predictions by Karl Marx have turned out to be false—as proven by later scientific research, including that of Max Weber. . . . In essence, Socialism is in the nature of a Utopia, and the statement that Socialism is a precise science, like physics for example, is only a fiction."

As I followed this philosophical debate in the cellar coffee house, I had the feeling of being in the company of medieval alchemists searching for the "philosopher's stone" that would explain the meaning of life. I wondered how an average intellectual in the United States and in the Soviet Union would react to this discussion. Probably, observing the strained living conditions, so obvious outside the four walls of the coffee house, the American intellectual would at once conclude that the ardent debaters were merely quixotic creatures or off-beat characters. The Soviet observer, on the other hand, would be frightened at having fallen into the hideout of some desperate heretics, maybe even conspirators. To the Polish intellectual this apparently abstract debate is part of daily life. In Poland the old blind submission to the Party's dictates no longer operates in the realm of culture, and the question of how far Poles can go in trying to adopt the positive achievements of Western culture without coming into open conflict with the regime is a real and contemporary one. Poland has become the Communist base for intellectual experiments in creating a kind of "third ideology" between orthodox Marxism and capitalism. The

Polish intellectuals will not rest content until they have clarified for themselves those ideological problems whose resolution is so important for their creativity.

V

A few days after his talk at the Czytelnik basement coffee house, Professor Kolakowski granted me an interview. Though I asked him to comment on some ticklish problems, he answered all my questions without reserve, eschewing Marxist formulations so as to be clear to Westerners who had no training in Marxist dialectics. Smiling, Kolakowski remarked this would be a challenging "experiment" and he was willing to try.

"Even when Stalinism was at its worst in Poland," Kolakowski began, "the country was never so isolated from the West nor was the pressure on the intellectuals ever so drastic as it was in Soviet Russia. Because of this very fact, it was easier for Poland to break with Stalinism. As early as 1953, right after Stalin's death, there were noticeable indications of disillusionment. There was talk inside the Party about the unhealthy economic situation, the disproportionate growth of bureaucracy in the state apparatus and the country's cultural life. Adam Wazyk's *Poem for Adults*, which appeared in the summer of 1955, was symptomatic of the mood of revolt that was coming to a head. Then came the revelations at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. In Poland, unlike Soviet Russia, the contents of Khrushchev's speech with its condemnation of Stalinism immediately became known to the Party activists. It increased the agitation of the Communist masses; overt criticism spread outward from the inner rings of the Party through the cultural groups and Party cells to the working class. The tragic events in Poznan in June 1956—the strike of the workers in the Cegielski locomotive factory and the bloody intervention of the police and army—revealed the deep abyss that lay between the working class and the ruling power. This was the beginning of the revolt that led to the October revolution."

Professor Kolakowski told me an interesting fact about himself in relation to the October revolution. Although he was bitterly attacked in Soviet Russia as the architect of the revolution, he was

actually outside Poland at the time. This is Kolakowski's account of those fateful days:

"At the outbreak of the October developments I was in Paris. I read in the French newspapers about the Soviet tanks encircling Warsaw and decided to return to Poland immediately. When I left Paris, I had no idea whose hands I would fall into in Poland, but when I arrived in Warsaw, I found the entire population in the throes of wild enthusiasm. Everyone was clamoring for two things: that Poland be given greater sovereignty in respect to Soviet Russia and that the forced collectivization of agriculture be stopped. Shortly after the stormy October days came the tragic events in Hungary, which were a fearful blow for Poland. The vast majority of the Party condemned the Soviet intervention. The spectre of Hungary fell like a heavy shadow over Poland. Our own hopes began to fade, and people were seized with a defeatist mood, because they knew that no far-reaching reforms could be expected any longer. . . .

"The national unity forged in October could not be long maintained. Internal conflicts, discarded only during the period of agitation and under threat of the outside danger, came to the surface again. The new freedoms were abused by the defeatist remnants of political reaction, waiting for the first opportunity to raise their heads again. Reactionary Catholic groups also emerged; they had a long tradition of solidarity with backward social forces. Then out-and-out hoodlums, with no sense of political responsibility at all, became active and started agitation of an anti-Semitic character in different parts of the country; but they, of course, were no organized political movement representing a serious danger to the Gomulka regime. The ones who really undermined the achievements of the October revolution were the Stalinist reactionaries. There are still many people left in the state apparatus and the Party machine who are interested in discrediting the Gomulka regime and in bringing back Stalinism. Stalinist reaction is also supported by the Pax movement of Stanislaw Piasecki; Pax, created by the Stalinist regime, was given a monopoly on representing Catholic interests in Poland.

"But there is a group of Catholic leaders in Poland who sincerely support Socialist principles and try to bring them into har-

mony with the Catholic religious viewpoint. This is the group attached to the magazine *Za I Przeciw* ("For and Against"), headed by the Sejm deputy Dr. Jan Frankowski. However, most of the Catholics in Poland support Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, whose understanding with Wladyslaw Gomulka was merely an act of political expediency."

In general, Professor Kolakowski expressed optimism over the prospects for the Gomulka regime and characterized the widespread mood of disillusionment and apathy in Poland as transitory. He believed it to be the result of exaggerated notions held by the Polish people of what the October revolution could accomplish. Professor Kolakowski summarized: "The October revolution brought in its wake many achievements that cannot be wiped out. Chief of these is a new cultural climate, freedom of scientific research and artistic creativity. The growth in Polish sovereignty and the new agricultural policy represent essential and permanent progress which cannot be turned back just as we cannot return to 'socialist realism' in art in Poland."

Lastly, Kolakowski rejected the insinuations by his Party opponents who purported to believe that he was supporting various groups attempting to revive a multiparty system in Poland. "I maintain that the one-party system has to be continued in Poland. It is impossible to conceive of a situation where all political parties could resume activity. Such a situation would automatically lead to catastrophe. I am against giving freedom of activity in Poland to anti-Semites, racists and militarists; but I am for constructive social criticism and free expression of opinion in this country. What this means is not absolute political democracy but a step-by-step broadening of political freedoms so as to represent the trends within the regime.

"As for Socialist theory, I maintain that Karl Marx's predictions have been fulfilled insofar as modern technology is creating a natural trend toward the development of collective forms of ownership. The only question that remains is what forms this socialization is to take. Today we know that extreme state centralization of economic life has proved to be wrong and that there is no ideal Socialist model to fit every country."

VI

In Poland the debate on Leszek Kolakowski's ideas is on a high intellectual level, one unparalleled in any other Communist country. The humanists and the liberal Catholic writers argue philosophical and ethical concepts with Professor Kolakowski; the Marxists analyze Kolakowski's deviations from Marxism and Leninism. It is only the Party publicists who draw the pragmatic conclusion that Kolakowski's ideas are weakening Party unity. On the other hand, in Soviet Russia and the other Communist countries, such as Czechoslovakia, Hungary and China, no one debates with Kolakowski. He is simply categorized as a "dangerous revisionist" playing the same role in the modern Communist movement that Eduard Bernstein played in the Socialist movement at the end of the nineteenth century when he published his famous *Evolutionary Socialism* which began a passionate controversy that continued for years.

In *Evolutionary Socialism* Bernstein rejected the Marxist principles of the necessity for social revolution and proletarian dictatorship in order to improve the lot of the working class. Bernstein argued that gradual, peaceful reforms under the capitalistic system, such as social legislation and the workers' struggle for higher wages, would eventually do away with social injustices; Socialism could be achieved in an evolutionary, bloodless manner. Bernstein regarded himself as a Marxist to the end, but the Marxist theoreticians of his day termed him "the liquidator of Marxism." And now in Soviet Russia the Polish revisionists are being condemned as "liquidators of Marxism-Leninism."

The way the revisionists are being combated in Soviet Russia is the best evidence that the Stalinist position on the Party's monopoly of all areas of intellectual life has not changed a whit. There are no theoretical discussions; instead, official Party propagandists deliver themselves of flat monologues, presenting arguments in support of the official Party line. Thus, for example, a man called P. Konstantinov, head of the Soviet Agitprop (the propaganda section of the Party), undertook to answer Professor Kolakowski's theories in the Soviet Union. Konstantinov simply threw out Kolakowski's criticism of Stalinism as a criminal distortion of Marxism

and placed Kolakowski in the camp of the enemies of Communism.

This dismissal was part of an article called "Against Contemporary Revisionism" published in *Pravda* on February 5, 1958. The article dismissed the new revisionists along with the old as "enemies within the workers' movement hiding behind Marxist cloaks. . . . The revisionists are criticizing Socialism in order to weaken the Socialist forces and to defend capitalism." Konstantinov asserts that the revisionist slogan of "national Communism," as raised in Poland and Yugoslavia, had been "advanced by the bourgeoisie in the United States and other countries." Konstantinov goes on to describe how dangerous revisionism is for Party unity. But in the same breath he avers that the danger had been averted because "the Communist Party has unmasked and defeated the ideas of the anti-Party group of Malenkov, Kaganovich, Molotov, as well as Shepilov who had joined them."

It would seem that, even after Shepilov's expulsion from the Party, revisionism remained the chief enemy within. Shepilov was considered a revisionist in the Soviet Union because he had tolerated literary, dramatic and musical works that ran counter to Socialist realism. Konstantinov passed over the fact that, after the Malenkov-Molotov group had been deposed, the Soviet Communist Party revived the Stalinist dogmas on the ideological front, applying the brutal methods of the expelled Stalinist dogmatists to wage war on the revisionists. Kolakowski bore the brunt of Konstantinov's attack:

> "The disguised intent behind revisionism is to erase the boundaries between Marxist-Leninist and bourgeois theory. . . . Revisionism leads to the theory and practice of political disarmament for the working class and the working class party. Instead of dividing the world into those who are for Marxism and those who are its enemies, Kolakowski divides the world into left-wing and right-wing humanists. Obviously, revisionism leads to liquidationism, a complete acceptance of the bourgeois position. What Imre Nagy did in Hungary politically, the Kolakowskis are doing in Poland theoretically."

Imagine what would have happened to Leszek Kolakowski if he had lived in Soviet Russia or Hungary. In Poland, however,

even Professor Kolakowski's bitterest antagonists have not tried to dispute his analysis of the Stalin era. The most outspoken orthodox Communists in Poland acknowledge that Stalinism left deep scars in every area of national life. In respect to their view on the aftermath of Stalinism, Moscow and Warsaw differ sharply. While Konstantinov denies categorically the existence of any crisis whatsoever in Communism (that is only "slander by bourgeois ideologists"), the Polish Party theoreticians openly admit that the crisis is still far from over. Still, the Gomulka camp theoreticians disagree with Kolakowski on the ways and means of overcoming the crisis. They assert that the revisionists have minimized the achievements of the Gomulka regime. By arousing "doubts and dissatisfaction among the activists whose task is to carry out the Socialist transformation of Poland," the revisionists, say the Gomulka faction, are hindering the nation's positive efforts.

This was the position formulated by Ludwik Krasucki in *Trybuna Ludu,* the official organ of the Polish Communist Party. Under attack was Kolakowski's reputed opposition to the Marxist-Leninist concept of the role and character of the Party under a Communist regime. Krasucki charged the revisionist leader with trying to "dilute the Party," since his "version of ethical Socialism requires no instrument for the transformation of reality, which he completely ignores." Krasucki arrived at the mocking conclusion that Kolakowski "wants to convert the strategic-tactical program of the Communist Party into the Ten Commandments of moral virtues and pious hopes."

The magazine *Polityka* pressed similar complaints. *Polityka* is the organ of the theoreticians and publicists belonging to the Gomulka inner circle. An editorial defining "What Revisionism Is and What It Is Not" noted that "revisionists demand that the Party tolerate separate wings with political platforms of their own; these wings are to be permitted openly to defend their own points of view and to criticize the Party line. The victory of the revisionist concept of the Party would lead to the Party's liquidation." An oblique reply to Kolakowski's *"Responsibility and History,"* the editorial declared:

> "The contemporary revisionists in the workers' movement are not merely defending the old ideas of Eduard Bernstein. They also

have another characteristic in common with the old revisionists. They share the same opportunistic attitude toward capitalism, the bourgeoisie and its ideology; finally, they share Bernstein's doubts about Socialism."

VII

The Party's spokesmen have not been alone in criticizing Kolakowski's revisionist ideas. The intellectual gauntlet was picked up by Professor Adam Schaff, the leading Marxist theoretician of the Polish Communist Party, originally Kolakowski's mentor. Schaff has not involved himself in a personal polemic with his former disciple. Mentioning no names, Schaff restricts his analysis of revisionism to the problem of the regeneration of Communism which Kolakowski was the first to raise in Poland. One has the impression from the tone of Professor Schaff's essays that he is not limiting himself to interpreting the Party's position within the framework of disciplined Marxist thinking. Rather, he is expressing principles that he believes the Party ought to defend. This, of course, is the role that Kolakowski assigns to the Marxist theoreticians: to be above the Party and serve as an intellectual check on Party activity.

In October 1957, Schaff published an article called "Ideological Questions and Politics" in *Przeglad Kulturalny*. The article contains a warning that "the struggle against revisionism may turn into a defense of dogmatism, and the term 'revisionism' may be used as a cudgel to fight off independent, creative thinking." Professor Schaff argues that no Marxist tenet can hold out against concrete facts that deny it. Going still further, Schaff asserts that specific Marxist tenets can be modified, even completely rejected, "after honest investigation of the facts. . . . This is the principle of creative Marxism. Any other approach is dogmatism. . . . We are for independent thinking but against ideological liquidation." This is an obvious recognition on Professor Schaff's part that revisionism does include positive, creative elements which must be distinguished from revisionism's "liquidating tendency."

Later, in a series of articles headed "Morality and Politics," Professor Schaff concentrates almost exclusively on the problems

that Kolakowski had raised in his *Responsibility and History.* Schaff justifies the application of moral judgments to political problems which is characteristic of the contemporary ideological discussion in Poland. The era of Stalinist "errors and distortions," Schaff stresses, produced one valuable consequence: "people have become extremely sensitive to the problem of the moral responsibility of the individual and of his actions—and it must be admitted that they are right." However, Schaff hastens to point out that, applying the classic Marxist dialectical approach, the revisionists' moral touchstone has "a negative moral feature," because "instead of posing the problem of morality *in* politics, the thesis that is advanced is: morality *or* politics."

"Dirty politics is not moral," Schaff concedes. But the extreme moralists err in "having created a theoretical basis for abandoning politics on the pretext that politics is a dirty business. So we must say to the opponents of politics that so long as we live in society, we will never succeed in accomplishing the miracle of liberating ourselves from politics." Besides, moralists or Utopians who believe in absolute morality, "in the moral imperative of Kant, calling on everyone to resign from politics, actually are playing the worst kind of politics—really leaving the field to dirty politics—because they weaken the social resistance to dirty politics."

This is Schaff's reply to Kolakowski's partial defense of Cleric who withdraws from political activity when it produces moral conflict in him. On the other hand, Schaff does not comment on Kolakowski's insistence that the morally sensitive individual would not run away from politics if the regime in power were to give him the right freely to declare his opinions and thus exert some influence on politics. Schaff's unstated position on this argument may be gathered from his assertion that the Gomulka regime does allow for some criticism. But, Schaff argues, because criticism of the past has been justified, a kind of inflation in criticism has developed in Poland: it has become the thing to criticize everybody and everything without rime or reason.

At this point Professor Schaff admonishes the coffee-house-intellectuals and pseudo-revolutionaries who consider "everyone who is anti" to be a hero and observes caustically that the Gomulka regime's opposition never has a worse fate to fear under

present circumstances than to be "sent abroad for several months." (This is an allusion to Professor Kolakowski. In the spring of 1958 he was "punished" for insisting that the promised October reforms be speeded up by being given a stipend which enabled him to go to Holland to continue his research into Spinoza's teachings.)

Professor Schaff holds a leading position among the Party theoreticians in Poland. And yet, in contrast with Soviet definitions of revisionism, Schaff's own theories may well be called revisionist in their assertion that there are gaps in Marxist philosophy in the area of ethics. Schaff attributes these gaps to Karl Marx's preoccupation with the concrete tasks of analyzing the laws which dictate historical developments in order to further a class struggle against capitalism. Thus absorbed, says Schaff, Marx was unable at the time to devote himself to certain theoretical problems that he had marked off for research. Unfortunately, the gaps that Marx and Lenin after him had left in their version of historical determinism had been filled by the existentialism of Sartre and other non-Marxist philosophers; but, Professor Schaff declares, it is really impossible to establish a viable link between Marxist materialism and the subjectivism of existentialists. Marxist theoreticians ought to undertake the problems that Marx and Lenin did not treat. Schaff concludes:

> "The rise of a number of Socialist countries with new problems and difficulties has made more pressing the need for an answer to questions concerning man and his relationship to society, the moral responsibility of the individual. . . . The problem of bringing into harmony the demands of Party discipline and the voice of conscience grows into a practical, not merely a theoretical problem. Hence the great interest in existentialism which is preoccupied with these problems while we do not treat them and can give no answer to them. So we lag behind existentialism, which, however, in my opinion, does not provide the correct answers to the questions posed."

Two essays by Professor Schaff that appeared in September 1958 are entitled "Morality and Politics" and "Moral Responsibility of Politics." They are evidence, once again, that Poland is not returning to Stalinist dogmatism, particularly when contrasted with the lead article in *Pravda* of April 10, 1958, with its assertion

that "the principles that the Party accepted during the period 1946–48 are correct and binding for all problems of philosophy, science and art." Adopting the style common to Communist Party resolutions which aim to pound home certain indisputable postulates, the Pravda editorial keeps reiterating the phrase "the Party decisions of the period 1946–48"—the beginning of the great Stalinist offensive. Those decisions are untouchable dogma.

> "The decisions of the Central Committee of the Party on questions of literature and art that were accepted during the period 1946–48 play a large role in the intellectual development of Soviet society and are the basis of the progressive revolutionary theories of Marxism-Leninism. . . . The tasks designated in the Party decisions of 1946–48 are of far-reaching significance for Soviet art and literature. The decisions exerted a fruitful influence on the development of art in the direction of Socialist realism. . . . These are the Leninist principles of the partisanship of art and its connection with the people. . . .
>
> "The most important Party documents of 1946–48 defend the ideological purity of our art, which is called on to serve as the spokesman of progressive Soviet ideology and morality."

This is a complete return to Stalinism as described by Professor Leszek Kolakowski. But in Poland these Soviet dogmas are things of the past. The debate continues on Kolakowski's excursions into the field of Socialist ethics, and such abstract philosophical questions as "the meaning of human existence" are not overlooked though orthodox Marxists describe such debate as no more than "petty bourgeois decadent nonsense."

The Polish position about the necessity of the exchange of ideas is clearly defined in Professor Adam Schaff's article in *Polityka*, September 27, 1958. Here Professor Schaff asserts that "the monopoly Marxism has held in the field of education" had actually produced a contrary effect: it had prevented the young people from accepting Marxism. As a consequence, Poland has stopped using the old "ukase methods in science" and no longer maintains "the monopolistic position of Marxism" in social science where "free competition between various tendencies and schools" was necessary. Schaff warns, however, that this freedom of competition between Marxists and non-Marxists will be tolerated only

if the Marxists display the same vigor and initiative in the ideological struggle as the non-Marxists.

> "What manner of free 'competition' can we have if only one side expresses itself? . . . In such a situation what we have is not free competition but a monopoly possessed by bourgeois ideology, and we can permit no such monopoly. So much is clear!"

Here we have a perfectly clear prediction of the Communist Party's reinvigorated offensive in the area of culture and, at the same time, an admission of the weakness of Communist ideological roots in Poland. Schaff argues that uncurbed freedom of expression will have to be an experiment in Poland, one entailing an element of "risk"; the regime will have to remain watchful since it is risking the "loss of a whole generation." The regime is watchful, but meanwhile the principle of free exchange of opinion is practiced in Poland.

At the second anniversary of the October 1956 revolt the leadership of the Polish Communist Party solemnly proclaimed its first victory over revisionist influences. At the same time, the most important Polish literary periodical, *Tworczosc*, published a piece of Communist heresy by the leader of the revisionists. Leszek Kolakowski's philosophical essay with the intriguing title, "A Tribute to the Inconsequential," treats the position of the individual in the conflict between *pure* reason and *pragmatic* reason. His argument is that, in specific instances, the individual is justified in acting illogically, inconsequentially, though to act so is to contradict his own convictions and principles.

The Marxist existentialist philosopher begins by analyzing various fanatical movements that have brought misery to mankind because they ordered their adherents to be always *consequential* and, when necessary, to be merciless in carrying their principles to their logical conclusion. As an example, Kolakowski cites the Catholic philosophers who argued that the Inquisition was justified; following this argument to its logical conclusion, they elevated the hangman to the role of guardian of their principles. Against this "consequentiality" Kolakowski maintains that the individual is justified in the name of tolerance and humanity in deviating from his own convictions and behaving inconsequentially.

> "The race of nonconsequential human beings remains one of the most important sources for the hope that the human species will endure. The race I speak of consists in part of those who believe in God and yet do not insist that heretics be put to the stake. In part it also consists of those who do not believe in God and adopt revolutionary means to effect social changes. Nevertheless, they reject certain modes of behavior as contradictory to the moral traditions in which they were reared. They act in this manner although they admit that the social changes for which they are striving could have been more easily achieved (by behaving fanatically). In other words, complete consequentiality is identical with pragmatic fanaticism, and nonconsequentiality is a source of tolerance."

For a contemporary political example, Kolakowski cites the citizen's relation to the state. He arrives at the sardonic conclusion that the consequential citizen is one who is proud to cooperate with the secret police, because he is convinced that the "existence, welfare and development of the state depend on the police." On the other hand, the citizen who hesitates to inform on his fellows to the secret police is guilty of being a "nonconsequential citizen." It is not, Kolakowski explains, that he is advocating the Aristotelian "golden mean" (the "genius of universal compromise" believed in the possibility of avoiding extremes and practicing "pragmatic sense"). This Kolakowski rejects as a simplification leading to the deceptive conclusion that all contradictions and conflicts are only the result of a temporary "disorder in human existence that will disappear in another age." No, says Kolakowski, "it is not harmony and synthesis that are natural but contradictions, for these are a result of human nature; the conflict between pure reason and pragmatic reason is also eternal."

This, then, is Leszek Kolakowski's view of the world. It is one of everlasting struggle and controversy between extreme forces and ideas that can never be composed into an enduring harmony. True, in certain instances, a synthesis can result from opposing forces; but the experience of history proves that a second contradiction or conflict immediately arises. The problem that the individual must constantly face is first to select between alternative forces, and, second, to behave in accord with accepted principles. Only the fanatic has no serious difficulty in choosing freely.

Here Kolakowski comes to the great question of the day in contemporary Polish life: the conflict between the Catholic Church and the Communist regime. He places himself among those who view religious institutions as exerting a "dangerous" influence on public life in Poland; but he recognizes that this influence "manifests itself in response to the incontrovertible will of the people, and that will cannot be suppressed." Concretely, the situation is one in which the individual Pole faces the necessity of being *for* or *against*—e.g., religious instruction in the school system. This, Kolakowski notes, is a terrible dilemma for individuals like himself. He cannot be inconsequential in regard to those (Marxist) principles that he regards as sacred. On the other hand, he does not wish to betray the principle of *vox populi.*

> "This is no artificial or fortuitous example. Does one not find members of parliament everywhere voting in favor of proposals with the secret hope that the opposition will win?"

It follows that Kolakowski is against the mechanical approach toward the resolution of conflict practiced throughout the Communist world—the use of force. To the young philosopher conflicts are an inevitable and natural part of human existence with a justification of their own.

> "We do not demand that institutions which the majority of the population wish beyond a doubt to maintain should be liquidated forcibly. Nor, on the other hand, do we wish to abandon the struggle to do away with these institutions."

It is apparent to Kolakowski that those who demand absolute consequentiality must either suffer internal conflict or else create an "ideological fiction that supplies them with the justification for slaughtering all the enemies of tolerance in order to be able to practice boundless tolerance."

"In Praise of the Inconsequential" is a kind of summation of all the ideological discussions in Poland—discussions suppressed in every other Communist country. Kolakowski has thrown a philosophic stone into the frozen river of Communist ideology, setting in motion rings of skepticism. Will all human conflict and social contradiction really disappear under Socialism? To Kolakowski's orthodox opponents, this skepticism is heresy to Socialism itself in

that it doubts Socialism's superiority to capitalism. As a Marxist, Kolakowski recognizes that Socialism resolves certain contradictions that exist in the capitalistic world, but he considers the assertion that Socialism will create an ideal world of harmony where conflict will cease to exist to be a distortion of Marxist thinking. Hence his strong stand against the belief that any means are acceptable if they lead to the Socialist El Dorado. He calls for a *consequential* position when elementary moral values are involved, such as respect for human life and human dignity. The individual is morally obliged to take such a position even when it is *non-consequential* in terms of his "civic duty" under a Communist regime.

25

TOWARD THE FUTURE

During the three-year period of ideological ferment that followed the October 1956 revolt, Gomulka devoted his entire energy to consolidating the shaky Party, for in Poland, as elsewhere behind the Iron Curtain, that is the chief factor in gaining and maintaining power. The Party's reorganization took longer than Gomulka had expected. He was forced to postpone the Third Party Congress several times so that it was not held until March 1959.

The Third Congress was unusual from the first. The usual Communist strategy at such occasions is to indulge in self-congratulation, pointing to complete victory on every front—ideological, social, economic, cultural—but Gomulka opened the Third Congress with a frank admission of shortcomings. True, the Party had been consolidated, but its influence remained weak among two important segments of the population in Poland, the peasants and the intellectuals. Gomulka reported that while the Party had

strengthened its hold on the industrial working class, its grip on the university students, professionals and creative people was weak, its hold on the peasants downright feeble.

Formally, the Congress heard declarations of unwavering loyalty delivered in the name of the non-Communist peasant masses and intellectuals by their official representatives, Stefan Ignar, the chairman of the Peasants' Party (Z.S.L.—*Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe*), and Professor Stanislaw Kulczynski, chairman of the Democratic Party (S.D.—*Stronnictwo Demokratyczne*). Ignar and Kulczynski were given priority in the speech-making; their turn came after the programmatic speeches delivered by the top Communist leaders, Gomulka, Stefan Jedrychowski, Edward Ochab and Roman Zambrowski. Despite this important place that the representatives of the Z.S.L. and S.D. were given in the Congress proceedings, it was clear that the parties they represented were no more than hollow shells, without any mass backing. As Gomulka noted, the two parties had only limited influence "among a section of the peasants" and "certain intellectual circles."

For the most part the Congress was well disciplined, indicating that Gomulka and the men near him had a firm hold on the Party apparatus; with two exceptions no untoward development marred the serenity of the Congress. The extreme Stalinists of the Natolin group distributed an anonymous, mimeographed paper among the delegates, containing a violent attack on Gomulka and his men; the paper was notable for anti-Semitic allusions to the Communist leaders' "Jewish wives." And Hilary Minc, the former economic dictator of Poland during the Stalinist era, surprised the delegates by appearing on the rostrum among the invited guests.

A distant echo of the nightmare that hung over Poland a decade before was heard at the concluding session of the Third Congress when the assembly of 1431 delegates solemnly nullified the resolution of the Third Plenum, branding Gomulka and his followers as dangerous "right-wing nationalist deviationists." Yet all but a few of the men responsible for the purge and the subsequent jailing of Gomulka and his friends were present at the Third Congress. Several of them were pushed out of the Party's Central Committee; these included the leaders of the so-called

Natolin group and among them Franciszek Mazur, Kazimierz Mijal, Franciszek Jozwiak and Waclaw Lewikowski, a former Vice-Minister of the abolished Security Police, who gave the order to arrest Gomulka. Considering the provocation, this was a belated relatively mild punishment. But the continued presence on the Central Committee of such hated members of the Natolin Group as Zenon Nowak, Boleslaw Ruminsky and General Kazimierz Witaszewski was an indication of the extent to which Gomulka was willing to compromise with the old-line Stalinist faction.

But Gomulka's strong hand was everywhere evident. He had ordered all speeches censored, not only those made by the Polish Party delegates but also the speeches delivered by the representatives of the forty-four Communist countries at the Congress, not excepting Soviet Russia or China. Polish Communist Party leadership instructed the Congress's censorship committee to soften any attacks delivered against Western powers and to delete any provocative phrases at the expense of Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia. As a result, much to the amazement of the delegates, Nikolai Ignatov, the secretary of the Soviet Communist Party's central committee and his country's representative, never even mentioned Tito by name. Ignatov contented himself with asserting triumphantly that the Union of Yugoslav Communists had not "succeeded in seducing any of our fraternal parties from the Marxist-Leninist road." Ignatov reserved the full force of his verbal arsenal for an attack on the "unmasked group of Molotov, Kaganovich, Malenkov, Bulganin and Shepilov," as "despicable splinterers." (Paradoxically, mention of Molotov and Kaganovich rang a bell in the minds of the Polish delegates; they remembered that fateful October day three years before when Nikita Khrushchev himself had appeared in Warsaw accompanied by these same "despicable splinterers" to prevent Gomulka from coming to power.)

Gomulka was the only one to call Tito by name but with none of the customary odious epithets. Calmly analyzing the failure of the Yugoslav Communist Party, Gomulka made the point that "the Union of Yugoslav Communists has been the only group to break with the unity of international Communism." But the Yugoslavs now found themselves isolated; they "belonged to no part of the international workers' movement, neither that section

led by the Communists nor the section that is under the influence of reformists, Socialist and Social Democratic parties. . . . Revisionism has led (the Yugoslav Communists) into this (isolated) position." At the same time Gomulka, though stressing that the Polish United Workers' Party had no partisan contacts with the Yugoslav Union of Communists, made an important distinction: "With Yugoslavia, as a state, Poland maintains normal friendly relations." There was "lively cooperation in the economic and cultural fields" between the two countries.

The problems of dogmatism and revisionism in Poland occupied a large part of both of Gomulka's speeches, at the opening and closing of the Congress. He tended to separate the two problems. Rigid sectarian dogmatism was easy to combat since its support was restricted to narrow Party circles, but revisionism had struck deep roots into large sections of the Polish population, especially the intellectuals; hence it represented the real danger. In Gomulka's own words:

> "The dogmatists are alienated from the masses; they don't understand the new developments and are afraid of them; they are incapable of understanding the developments and are afraid of them; they are incapable of understanding the developments special to our country, so they cling to models of building Socialism developed in other times and other circumstances. Revisionism, on the other hand, is the most important danger to our Party now not because of the large number of revisionists but because there is an objective identity of interests between revisionism and the anti-Socialist, bourgeois forces, both at home and abroad."

As Gomulka sees the situation, revisionist ideas exert a powerful attraction for the Polish people because "Poland is a country where Socialism is not yet built. . . . Many social forces are under the influence of bourgeois political views."

All through the debate over revisionism at the Third Congress, Professor Leszek Kolakowski's name was never mentioned, but the shadow of his ideas and influence hung over every word spoken on the subject. This was particularly true of the discussion about the national policy toward culture which the Gomulka regime is struggling to establish. Gomulka's preoccupation with the problems of science, art and literature was far from incidental; the

large part of his programmatic speech dealing with these matters was a revelation at the Congress.

Though, as I have said, Gomulka condemned revisionism as a "dangerous development" in Poland, indirectly he recognized the correctness of Kolakowski's theme: the necessity for freedom of discussion and uninhibited exchange of ideas both within the Polish Communist Party itself and with the outside, Western world. As Gomulka put it:

> "There is no doubt that we have achieved much during the recent period in combating rigidity and dogmatism in the social sciences. It is all to the good! An atmosphere of free discussion in science, broadening contact with science all over the world not excepting the capitalist countries, daring in handling new themes even though we are not always in accord with the directions this daring sometimes takes—these are all developments that are conducive to intellectual revival and are propitious for scientific progress. Such tendencies should be continued and expanded."

To summarize, the proceedings of the ten-day Party Congress show two things: first, that Gomulka holds the reins of power fast in his hands; and second, that the Kremlin has (for the time being at any rate) made its peace with the idea that the freedoms Poland achieved during its revolt of October 1956 cannot be wiped out.

In purging the Polish Communist Party of dogmatists and revisionists, Gomulka trained his heaviest armament on the revisionists whose political platform was built on Professor Kolakowski's ideas. Gomulka conceded that it was mainly the revisionists who had been expelled because they caused the most confusion in the Party and that the struggle against them is far from over. But Leszek Kolakowski himself was not expelled from the Party. True, he can no longer exert direct influence within the Party itself, but he has not been deprived of the opportunity of expressing his opinions and ideas outside the Party. This is still another bit of evidence of the unique character of the Gomulka regime, evidence that Poland has broken with the Soviet principle of the Party's absolute monopoly in all spheres of the nation's life.

Notes on Some of the Key Figures

Initials are used below as follows:

P.Z.P.R. for Polish United Workers' Party
P.P.S. for Polish Socialist Party
Z.S.L. for United Peasants' Party

Berman, Jakub, Virtual dictator of Poland in the Stalinist era, boss of police and censorship.

Bienkowski, Wladyslaw, Writer, Minister of Education, played an important part in the return of Gomulka to power.

Bierut, Boleslaw, First Secretary of the P.Z.P.R., who was the architect of the Stalinist regime in Poland. Died in Moscow (March 1956) while attending the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. at which Nikita Khrushchev denounced Stalin.

Bobrowski, Professor Czeslaw, Former leader of the P.P.S., economist, member of the State Economic Council.

Chalasinski, Professor Josef, Sociologist, expert witness at trial of Poznan rioters, September 1956.

Cyrankiewicz, Jozef, Former Secretary General of the P.P.S., Prime Minister since 1947, member of the Politburo of the P.Z.P.R.

Duracz, Anna, Former secretary of Jakub Berman, jailed for five years (1949–1954) on false charges of involvement with Noel Field.

Duracz, Jerzy, Leader of Communist youth movement in Poland, husband of Anna Duracz, took courageous stand against frame-up of Security Police.

Field, Noel, An American involved in the Rajk treason trials in Hungary, September 1949.

Gomulka, Wladyslaw, First Secretary General of the P.Z.P.R. since the 1956 October revolt; former Secretary General of the Polish Workers' Party before its unification with the P.P.S. in 1947 and Vice-Premier. For four years (1949–1954) a prisoner of the Stalin regime.

Hagmajer, Dr. Jerzy, Vice-President of the pro-Moscow Catholic Pax movement.

Ignar, Stefan, Chairman of the Z.S.L.

Jedrychowski, Stefan, Member of the Politburo and Minister for National Economy in the Gomulka government.

Jozwiak, Franciszek, Ousted member of the Politburo and government, leader of the pro-Moscow Natolin group.

Kliszko, Zenon, Member of Politburo, Vice-Minister of Justice and Secretary of the P.Z.P.R. Purged in 1949 together with Gomulka.

Kolakowski, Professor Leszek, Professor of philosophy and writer, leader of revolting Polish intellectuals, the so-called "revisionists." Author of a best-selling book on Spinoza.

Komar, General Waclaw, Commander of the Internal Security Corps, former commander of the Polish unit in the International Brigade during the civil war in Spain (1936–1939). Imprisoned during the police regime in Poland.

Konev, Marshal Ivan S., Commander of the Warsaw Pact forces stationed in Poland.

Kott, Jan, Writer, played important role during events of October 1956.

Kulczynski, Professor Stanislaw, Chairman of the Democratic Party (S.D.).

Lange, Professor Oscar, Vice-Chairman of the Council of State and Chairman of the State Economic Council. Former professor of economics at Chicago University, first Polish Communist Ambassador to Washington and permanent delegate to the United Nations.

Lechowicz, Wlodzimierz, Vice-President of the Democratic Party, principal defendant in 1949 trial trumped up by Polish Security Police.

Loga Sowinski, Ignacy, Member of the Politburo.

Lukacs, Georg, Marxist theoretician and leader of intellectual revolt in Hungary, co-founder of Hungarian Communist Party.

Maslenikov, Nikolai, Ex-press attaché of Soviet Embassy in Warsaw, involved in anti-Semitic intrigue after Gomulka's return to power.

Mikolajczyk, Stanislaw, Ex-Vice-Premier and exiled leader of the Polish Peasant Party.

Minc, Hilary, Ex-Vice-Premier and member of Politburo, economic czar of the Stalinist regime.

Morawski, Jerzy, Leading member of Politburo and secretary of P.Z.P.R.

Ochab, Edward, Member of Politburo and Minister for Agriculture, ex-First Secretary of the P.Z.P.R.; played an important role in accelerating return of Gomulka to power.

Osubka Morawski, Edward, Ex-Premier of Communist Poland (until 1948); former Socialist leader.

Polevoy, Boris, Secretary of the Union of Soviet Writers.

Piasecki, Boleslaw, President of the pro-Moscow Pax Organization; leader of the pre-war Polish fascist Falanga movement.

Ponomarenko, Panteleimon, Soviet Ambassador in Warsaw, recalled after the 1956 October revolt.

Radkiewicz, Stanislaw, Ex-Minister of Security Police.

Rajk, Laszlo, Hungarian Foreign Minister, executed on October 15, 1949.

Rapacki, Adam, Foreign Minister and member of Politburo.

Rokossovski, Konstantin, Soviet Marshal, ex-Defense Minister of Poland, expelled during the 1956 October revolt.

Rozanski, Jacek, Ex-Vice-Minister and chief of the Investigative Department of the Security Police until 1955, sentenced to 15 years in prison at the 1957 trial of Security Police officials.

Schaff, Professor Adam, Leading Marxist theoretician in Poland.

Skuszenka, Krystyna, Young theatre director who brought to the Polish stage many plays of Western authors.

Slonimski, Antoni, Noted poet and playwright, President of the Polish Writers Union, took vigorous stand against return of censorship under Gomulka regime.

Spychalski, Marian, Minister of Defense since October 1956, was jailed and manhandled by the Security Police during his imprisonment (1949–1955).

Starewicz, Artur, Member of the Central Committee of P.Z.P.R. in charge of press relations.

Stern, Janusz, Painter.

Wazyk, Adam, Noted poet, author of the "Poem for Adults."

Wyszynski, Stefan Cardinal, Primate of the Catholic Church in Poland.

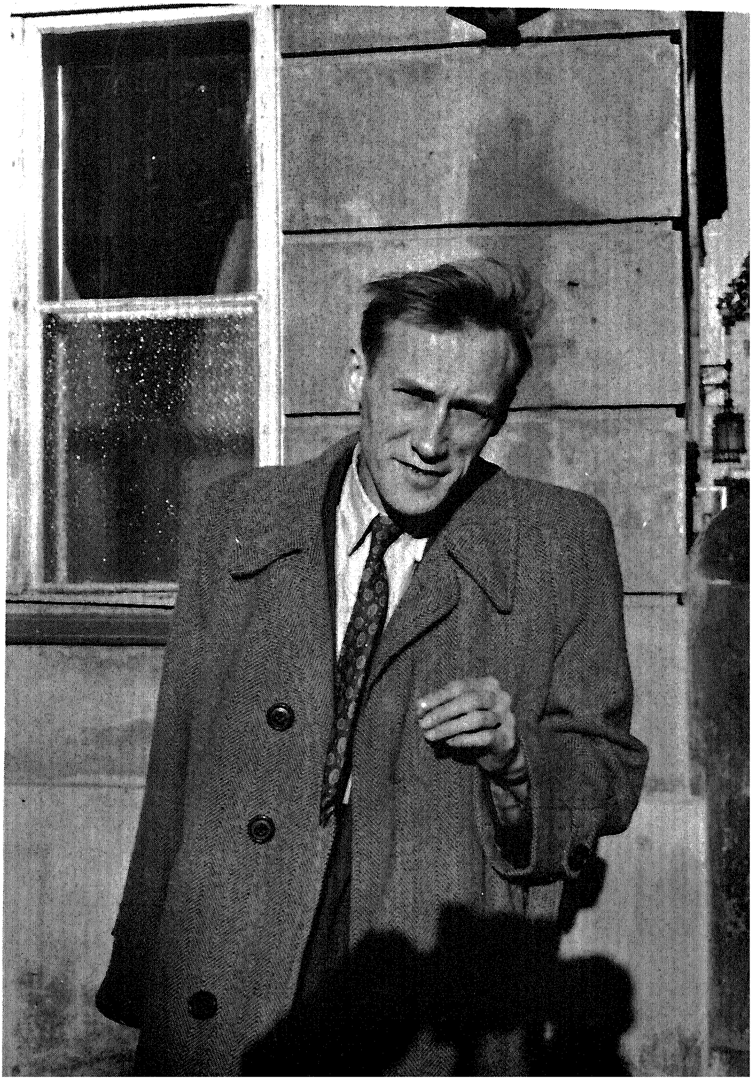
Woroszylski, Wiktor, Writer, ex-editor of *Nowa Kultura,* took vigorous stand against Soviet intervention in Hungary in October 1956.

Wudzki, Leon, Former Socialist, ex-member of the Central Committee of the P.Z.P.R.; main accuser of Jakub Berman at the historic Eighth Plenum in October 1956.

Zambrowski, Roman, Member of the Politburo and Secretary of the P.Z.P.R.

Zawadzki, Alexander, Member of the Politburo and Chairman of the Council of State.

Prof. Leszek Kolokowski, foremost Polish philosopher and leader of the Polish revisionists, photographed by S. L. Shneiderman at the entrance of the Hotel Bristol in Warsaw, after a long interview.



Eastphoto

The Josef Stalin Palace of Culture, an attraction for tourists, but a hated reminder of Soviet influence imposed on Poland.